

**BAY PINES VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
POSTDOCTORAL PSYCHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP
TRAINING BROCHURE (2022-23)**



Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences Service (MH&BSS)
Bay Pines VA Healthcare System

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Bay Pines VA Healthcare System

BAY PINES VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM GENERAL POSTDOCTORAL PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM

Bay Pines VA Health Care System
10,000 Bay Pines Blvd
Bay Pines FL, 33744
(727) 398-6661

APPLICATION DEADLINE for 2022-2023 Training Year: December 23, 2021

Welcome prospective Fellows!

Thank you for taking the time to learn about our Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Program. We hope you consider our training site, as Bay Pines offers not only an incredible quality of life, but also a rich, rewarding, and supportive training culture that values work-life balance, fairness, equality, respect for individual differences and diversity in its staff and trainees. Please feel free to reach out to us at any time with questions about our program and larger community!

Highlights of our Training Program and Community

- Location! The CW Bill Young VA Medical Center is located next to the Gulf of Mexico and Boca Ciega Bay, which offers 360 days of sunshine and warm (54-90 degrees Fahrenheit) weather year-round. During lunch you can walk out to our pier and watch for dolphins or manatees.
- Flexibility! Our training program has been developed to unite your interests and needs. Didactic schedules are carefully developed each academic year based precisely on a gap analysis to meet the needs and academic interests of the incoming training cohort. Research and training goals are customized to meet each Intern's personal training, specific career goals, necessary strengths, and challenges.
- Balance! Our staff models true work-life balance, promotes wellness, and self-care throughout the program. Interns have a true 40-hour training week and have plenty of time to enjoy the gulf, bay, parks, and community events. Within the facility itself, interns have access to gyms, yoga, and tai chi classes, as well as a running path surrounding the campus.
- Respect and Support! Our psychologists are well-respected across the medical center. We are highly integrated with patient care, which provides ample opportunities for collaboration with other disciplines. Psychologists' leadership positions provide opportunities to learn about roles psychologists can hold. Postdoctoral Fellows are held in high regard for their role within various treatment teams.
- Involvement with fulltime staff! We have a large and vibrant Training staff, and our Postdocs are integrated into various experiences with our fulltime staff – team meetings, staff Training Committee Meetings, and staff Multicultural and Diversity Seminars, for example.
- A great start for a future career in the VA! The clear majority of our Postdoctoral Fellows go on to work in VA facilities. Our excellent career retention speaks to our service culture and staff. Currently, eight of our previous Postdocs were hired as full-time staff psychologists at Bay Pines!

- Culture and Diversity! Bay Pines VA offers monthly on-campus multicultural events and fairs available for staff and trainees to attend during work hours. Our Training Programs take their commitment to promoting multicultural competence very seriously. The Multicultural Diversity Subcommittee meets monthly with a mission to support the development of multicultural competencies, appreciation of all forms of diversity, and the promotion of social justice. Members cultivate an environment of safety, that supports open and respectful dialogue, exchange of ideas, and self-reflection. Psychology Staff and Trainees at all levels are encouraged to join and participate. In addition, the larger Tampa Bay area offers a diverse and rich cultural makeup. Community festivals, parades, sporting events, fund raisers, advocacy events, faith-based events, music, film, and art shows are offered throughout the year. Many occur outdoors on our beautiful beaches or in our multitude of public parks.

ACCREDITATION STATUS

The General Postdoctoral Psychology Training Program at the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System is accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) and offers postdoctoral training to clinical and counseling psychology students from APA accredited universities and schools of professional psychology. Bay Pines has trained Postdoctoral Fellows since 2008 and has been fully accredited as an Internship in Professional Psychology by the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association (APA) since 2012.

For general information, individuals may contact:

American Psychological Association
750 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002-4242
(800) 374-2721

For information related to the programs accredited status, please contact the CoA at:

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation
American Psychological Association
750 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002
Phone: (202) 336-5979
E-mail: apaaccred@apa.org
Web: www.apa.org/ed/accreditation*

PSYCHOLOGY SETTING

The structure of the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System General Postdoctoral Psychology Training Program follows a competency based, integrated practice format as defined by American Psychological Association (APA) Commission of Accreditation standards and implementing regulations. During the 2021-2022 training year, the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System Psychology General Postdoctoral Psychology Training Program anticipates it will provide training for 4 full-time postdoctoral fellows. We are pleased to welcome you to our Medical Center and look forward to your application for admission. No fellowship positions are pre-allocated to any specific university program or VA pre-doctoral training site.

The Bay Pines VAHCS General Postdoctoral Psychology Training Program is committed to the scientist-practitioner based model in the delivery of clinical care, clinical research, and professional teaching. We emphasize and demonstrate respect for the individual differences and diversity in the delivery of clinical care, clinical research, and professional teaching. We strive to provide Residents with significant working experience with a variety of clinical populations while simultaneously applying scientific information in the conceptualization, assessment, and treatment of clinical problems. The General Postdoctoral Psychology Resident is expected to spend 70% time in direct clinical service activities and 30% time engaged in research and learning/teaching activities. We believe that teaching Residents in clinical practice, scholarly thinking, and clinical research design is best received and maintained within a "junior colleague" model of training. Our commitment to the Residents' professional growth and academic development is conveyed in a supportive training atmosphere emphasizing individual strengths. Residents are challenged to use critical thinking and encouraged toward creative participation in their scientific and clinical endeavors.

A guiding principle in all aspects of service delivery within the program is respect and human dignity for our patients. We emphasize patients' rights, self-determination, and the right to choose, including the patient's right to adequate medical, psychological, educational, recreational, and other community services, the patient's right to family participation in treatment, and delivery of care with the utmost privacy in the least restrictive environment. We honor cultural, ethnic, sexual orientation, religious, political and gender differences in our patients and deliver services accordingly.

ABOUT THE BAY PINES VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

The Bay Pines VA Healthcare System a level 1a, tertiary care facility headquartered in Bay Pines, Fla. Originally opened in 1933, the main medical center is located on 337 acres situated on the Gulf of Mexico approximately eight miles northwest of downtown Saint Petersburg, Fla. Co-located on the medical center campus are a VA Regional Office and a National Cemetery. This area is part of Tampa Bay, the second most populated metropolitan area in the state. The healthcare system operates nine facilities to include the main medical center in Bay Pines and outpatient clinics located in the Florida cities of Bradenton, Cape Coral, Naples, Palm Harbor, Port Charlotte, Sarasota, St. Petersburg, and Sebring. The medical center and its outpatient clinics serve Veterans residing in 10 counties in central southwest Florida. Every year, the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System provides a full range of high quality medical, psychiatric, and extended care services in outpatient, inpatient, Residential, nursing home, and home care settings.

The system is the fifth busiest VA healthcare system in the country based on patients treated or served. In FY2016, the organization provided care to 108,909 Veterans (92 percent male, 8 percent female), completed 1.46 million appointments, 26,204 emergency department visits, and 8,838 hospital admissions. Medical care was provided to Veterans of all eras to include World War II, Korean War, Post-Korean War, Vietnam, Post-Vietnam, Persian Gulf (including Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn) as well as other non-combat periods. Age ranges of Veterans served included 80 percent aged 55 and over, 15 percent aged 35-54 and 5 percent aged 30 and under.

The BPVAHCS is affiliated with more than 200 academic institutions representing a broad range of disciplines that provide training leading to certification through Internships and both Postdoctoral

Fellowship and Residency training. During FY2015, BPVAHCS hosted a total of 937 Allied Health Trainees and Medical Residents, completing a total of 252 clinical rotations within psychology, social work, medical, dental, optometry, audiology, speech, language pathology, pharmacy, nursing, social work, and other affiliated health training programs.

PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE AT BAY PINES

The C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center - Bay Pines VAHCS Psychology Staff includes 68 doctoral level clinical and counseling psychologists, 4 practicum students, 7 predoctoral interns, 6 postdoctoral residents, and 1 health science specialist. Our mission is to provide high quality psychological services to medical and psychiatric patients within the context of cooperative, multi-disciplinary teams. In addition, the staff is highly committed to the training of new professionals and is actively involved in the internship training program personally, as well as interdisciplinary. Research opportunities are found throughout the healthcare system.

Psychology is part of the Mental Health & Behavioral Sciences Service within the organization. The two primary disciplines in the service are Psychology and Psychiatry. The Chief is a Psychiatrist, and the Assistant Chief is a Psychologist. Staff psychologists are assigned to a variety of areas throughout the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System, to include the CW Bill Young VA Medical Center, the very large Lee County Healthcare Center, and our Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). This diversity in assignment is augmented by diversity among our staff as well with a variety of theoretical orientations, clinical and administrative experiences, multiple research and clinical specialties, and cultural backgrounds.

The two sections of the Psychology Service are managed by psychologists (i.e., Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Programs and General Psychology). Staff Psychologists participate in various profession-specific and system-wide committees that address issues relating to quality of patient care, efficient delivery of services and development of new programs.

PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING COMMITTEE

The Psychology Training Committee is responsible for overseeing all psychology training at all levels on campus. The Committee is comprised by the following individuals:

Chief, Psychology Service
Training Director, pre-Doctoral Internship Program (Chair)
Training Director, Practicum Program
Training Director, General Postdoctoral Psychology Residency Program
Training Director, Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Residency Program
Rotation Supervisors
Adjunctive Teaching and Research Supervisory Staff
Postdoctoral Residents
Intern Representative
Administrative Training Coordinator

Any Bay Pines Staff Psychologist with an active, valid, and unencumbered psychology license is eligible to join the Training Committee and participate in the training programs. The Psychology Training Committee is responsible for establishing policies pertaining to training; participating in the recruitment and selection of new trainees; evaluating and approving trainee training plans

and goals; provision of didactic seminars; addressing training issues as they affect the university-VA training relationships; considering any trainee grievances; and participation in the Psychology Training Programs ongoing self-assessment and quality improvement efforts. All Training Committee members are required to attend monthly seminars targeting ongoing learning and development in the provision of clinical supervision, considerations of ethics and legal issues in training, and multicultural diversity.

BAY PINES COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE AND PROGRAM ADAPTATIONS

In March of 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bay Pines VAHCS Training Programs, with the unwavering support of medical center leadership, successfully transitioned all previous Intern and Fellowship level Psychology Trainees to full or part-time telework while maintaining all training activities without significant disruption. The Training Director worked closely with the Chief of Psychology, Education Service, and the Office of Academic Affiliates to put together the plans and structure needed to continue the training program during the national crisis and adhere to facility and state level social distancing and shelter in place mandates. The Training Director followed all revised OAA, APPIC and APA CoA guidelines and rules to maintain a curriculum and training experience that met all program and accreditation requirements. The transition to telework, tele-supervision and telehealth practice is considered temporary, and will remain in compliance with flexibilities and allowances approved by facility, accreditation, and other governing bodies (e.g., APA CoA, OAA, APPIC) until the national crisis has ended.

For our current academic year all Health Service Psychology Trainees have been given the option to work on campus, where they are provided with PPE and work accommodations that facilitate CDC recommendations, facility social distancing guidelines and disease prevention measures, or to telework from their private residence, or select a hybrid of both options. Regardless of whether they work from home, or on-campus, each has continued to gain supervised experiences on clinical rotations via traditional in-person face-to-face, telework telehealth and/or on-campus telehealth methods, for individual and group-based therapy, assessment, and interdisciplinary patient care team meetings. To date, they have been able to attend and participate in all clinical program staff meetings, seminars, didactics and supervision via virtual media technologies, and benefit from live, direct observation of clinical care by supervising psychologists. At this time, all current trainees have access to VHA equipment to support telework (e.g., VA issued laptops, dual monitors), and PPE and private offices for on-campus, in person face-to-face clinical work. All Trainees have ad hoc telework agreements that will extend until the national crisis has ended and new guidance is issued.

It goes without saying that the health and safety of our Psychology Trainees, along with the competent care of our nation's veterans, is of utmost importance to us. We feel confident that we can continue to provide high quality training in professional psychology while simultaneously keeping our Trainees' health and wellness at the forefront in the years to come.

VHA ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR GENERAL POSTDOCTORAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) adheres to all Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action policies. As a Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Health Professions Trainee (HPT), you will receive a Federal appointment, and the following requirements will apply prior to that appointment:

1. United States Citizenship. VA is unable to consider applications from anyone who is not currently a U.S. citizen. Citizen verification is required following selection. All Residents must complete a Certification of Citizenship in the United States prior to beginning VA training. We are unable to consider applications from anyone who is not currently a U.S. citizen.
2. U.S. Social Security Number. All VA appointees must have a U.S. social security number (SSN) prior to beginning the pre-employment, on-boarding process at the VA.
3. A male applicant born after 12/31/1959 must have registered for the draft by their 26th birthday to be eligible for any US government employment, including selection as a paid VA trainee. Male applicants must sign a pre-appointment Certification Statement for Selective Service Registration before they can be processed into a training program. Exceptions can be granted only by the US Office of Personnel Management; exceptions are rarely granted.
4. VA training occurs in a health care setting. Some of the patients served by VA are elderly or infirm and could succumb to common illnesses like influenza. It is important to be able to document that your vaccinations are up to date and that you have been screened for active tuberculosis prior to starting your training at VA. Securing a statement from your current occupational health physician, regular health provider, or an urgent care clinic can expedite your appointment. Additionally, maintaining a current flu vaccination during the training years (or taking additional preventative measures to limit patient exposure to the flu) may be required. Please discuss this with the TD after you have matched and well before to your start date to facilitate your onboarding.
5. Drug Screening. The VA conducts drug screening exams on randomly selected personnel as well as new employees. Interns may be required to be tested prior to beginning work, and once on staff, they are subject to random selection as are all other clinical staff. Institutional policies on allowed prescription medications are based on federal government requirements for employment at a VA facility, not on local or state level rules and guidelines. While Medical Marijuana is legal at the “state” level in Florida, it is not sanctioned by the Federal Government for use by Federal Employees. Please contact the HR department for any questions on this. Please open link for Drug Free Workplace Policy:
https://www.va.gov/OAA/onboarding/VHA_HPTsDrug-FreeWorkplaceOAA_HRA.pdf
6. On August 12, 2021 VHA mandated that all Hybrid Title 38 employees, to include Health Psychology Trainees (HPT)s receive and provide proof of the COVID-19 vaccine or have an exemption filed (medical or religious) with the Designated Education Officer as a condition of VA appointment. <https://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/VA%20Form%2010-263%20COVID-19%20Vaccination.pdf>
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/hcw.html>
7. Residents must have completed all doctoral requirements and have record of degree conferral prior to starting the program. Only graduates from an American Psychological Association (APA) or Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) accredited graduate program in Clinical, Counseling, or Combined psychology, or Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS) accredited program in Clinical Science will be considered. Persons with a doctorate in another

area of psychology who meet the APA or CPA criteria for re-specialization training in Clinical, Counseling, or Combined Psychology may also be eligible.

8. Residents must have completed an internship program accredited by the APA Commission on Accreditation or have completed a VA-sponsored internship that is in the process of seeking accreditation to be eligible.

Pre-Training Certification Process - Training Qualifications and Credentials Verification

Letter (TQCVL): Unlike conventional professional staff who have their credentials verified by VETPRO and other means and may go thru an extensive pre-employment physical examination, Residents have their readiness to train verified by the Residency TD or other authorized OAA/Education Service personnel. The Residency TD or authorized personnel fills this form out based on review of submitted physical and health documents by the trainee. Under state and federal rules, trainees have had to receive recommended vaccinations and other health screenings prior to beginning their Residency. All trainees must have a Training Qualification Verification Letter on file prior to initiating Residency Training. The TQCVL serves three purposes: First, the TD or authorized personnel indicates that the trainee has completed academic requirements and is thus ready for this new level of responsibility/training. Second, to the fullest extent possible, the TD or authorized personnel will review submitted health documents to determine that the trainee is physically fit for duty. Third, to the fullest extent possible, the TD or authorized personnel will review the submitted health documents to determine if the trainee is psychologically healthy and able to undertake this new level of responsibility/training.

Physical Examination and Finger Printing/Background Check

Prior to initiation of Residency, all incoming Trainees must go through a physical examination with Occupational Health. Often, with the properly executed TQCVL, this will involve only having the TQCVL reviewed by the Occupational Health clinician, followed by a discussion of any additionally needed screenings/vaccinations required to work in a healthcare setting.

Physical Examination appointments must be conducted prior to initiating Residency and are coordinated through Human Resources. They can occur at a local VHA facility near your current place of employment or your current Internship, or at the Bay Pines VAHCS.

Fingerprint Screening and Background Investigation. Residents are subject to fingerprinting and background checks and must meet all institutional and federal government requirements for employment at a VA facility. Match result and selection decisions are contingent on passing these screens. All incoming trainees must complete finger printing and a background check prior to initiating Residency. This is arranged once the trainee has completed their OAA Mandatory Training for Trainees (MTT) and submitted the online forms to the Bay Pines OAA Education Service representative and HR Specialist. Once approved, the facility can initiate the ePAS (Electronic Permission Access) and PIV (personal Identity Verification) cards that will ultimately, allow your computer and medical record access.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Bay Pines VAMC Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program welcomes and strongly encourages applications from all qualified applicants, regardless of racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, disability, age, or other minority status. Those applying who have not yet completed

their internship, or who do not possess their doctorate by Sunday, 08/15/21, will not be admitted to the Fellowship program.

The application procedure begins with a letter of interest. Your letter should describe: Your reasons to apply for the program, doctorate degree completion status (including date of completion or anticipated date for dissertations defense), experience with therapy and assessment (including populations with which you have experience), and area(s) of clinical research interest.

How to apply: Please submit the following through the APPA CAS (APPIC Psychology Postdoctoral Application) system:

1. Letter of Interest – please indicate the Postdoctoral Training Track (Substance Abuse Treatment Program and Mental Health Clinic Track **OR** Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder clinic and Women's Clinic Primary Care Mental Health Integration Track) to which you are applying. Separate applications are NOT necessary if you would like to apply for both tracks – however, your letter of interest should indicate you would like to be considered for and why you believe you are a strong candidate for both tracks.
2. Application for Associated Health Occupations (10-2850D); available at <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/vha-10-2850d-fill.pdf>
3. Vitae, to include detailed descriptions of training, experience, research, and other relevant activities
4. Three letters of recommendation
5. A letter from the chair of your dissertation committee detailing dissertation completion status, including anticipated completion date. Your doctoral degree must be completed before the start date of your postdoctoral training.
6. Official transcripts sent directly from your university

SELECTION PROCEDURES:

Applications will be reviewed by the General Postdoctoral Psychology Training Staff and current Residents. Selected candidates will be invited to interview with General Postdoctoral Training Staff members and current Residents. Invitations for interviews will be made by the Training Director or designee. The Residency Program will also notify applicants when a decision is made that we are unable to extend an interview offer. Until the Residency Program notifies an applicant of an interview offer or informs them that an offer will not be forthcoming, applicants should consider their candidacy to be active.

This year, all interviews will be conducted virtually using video conferencing (e.g., Zoom) or telephone, between the dates of January 17, 2022 and February 11, 2022. Interview dates and times will be arranged based on candidate and staff availability/preference. If a candidate would like an in-person tour of the facility, it can be arranged (but it is NOT required or expected and will not be a factor in selection).

Following interviews, the selection committee will rank order applicants. Please note we will be participating in the APPA CAS (APPIC Psychology Postdoctoral Application) matching process again this year and will be adhering to the rules governing the Uniform Notification Date selection process. As such, this Residency site agrees to abide by the guidelines indicating that no person at this facility will solicit, accept, or use any ranking-related information from any Residency applicant. For information regarding APPIC Postdoctoral Selection Guidelines, please visit the following: <https://www.appic.org/Postdocs/Selection-Resources/Timelines-for-Postdoctoral-Selection/Postdoctoral-Selection-Guidelines>

APPA CAS application packets must be completed by Midnight on **December 23, 2021**. The Fellowship appointment is scheduled to commence on August 14, 2022.

Finally, applicants are reminded that they should feel free and are welcome to contact the General Postdoctoral Psychology Program Training Director to discuss any issue of relevance. Please contact **Daniel Philip, PhD at Daniel.Philip@va.gov or by phone at (727) 398-6661 x15898**:

If you have any specific questions related to eligibility requirements for Federal Employment, please contact Human Resources at 727-398-6661 x 15663

For further information, please contact us by email:

vhabaypsychologytraining@va.gov

Psychology Training Programs at Bay Pines

Associate Chief of Mental Health Service, Chief of Psychology Service

Ronald Braasch, PhD.

Mental Health and Behavioral Science Service (116)

Physical Address:

C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center

Bay Pines VA Healthcare System

10000 Bay Pines Blvd

Bay Pines, FL 33744

BAY PINES PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The Bay Pines VAHCS serves Veterans who represent a wide variety of dimensions of diversity, including but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, regional affiliation, age, and religious/spiritual orientation. The Bay Pines VA's Psychology Training Programs are deeply committed to the appreciation of diversity and the development of multicultural competence. During the training year, interns continue to build on their graduate training in expanding their awareness, knowledge, and skill set to enhance multicultural competence through a variety of experiences. These include diversity focused presentations, readings, and learning activities; discussions with supervisors, peers, and other clinical staff; and direct provision of services to Veterans with diverse backgrounds. The overall goal of diversity

related training activities is the promotion of social justice and multicultural competence within the mental health profession and society.

MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY SUB COMMITTEE

The Multicultural Diversity Subcommittee for the Psychology Training Programs functions as an extension of the Psychology Training Committee to assist Psychology Trainees in developing multicultural competencies, appreciating diversity in all its forms, and promoting social justice. Within its roles with the Psychology Internship and Postdoctoral Training Programs, the Multicultural Diversity Subcommittee for Psychology Training seeks to cultivate an environment that supports open and respectful dialogue, exchange of ideas, and self-reflection. It is composed of Bay Pines VA Psychologists and Psychology Trainees who are invested in helping to promote multicultural competence for working with a highly diverse patient population and to explore how, as mental health professionals, our individual differences, worldview, biases, theoretical framework, and life experiences affect our clinical work. In conjunction with the Training Committee, the Multicultural Diversity Sub Committee facilitates the Multicultural Training Seminar Series and its associated experiential / immersion activities.

In keeping with the APA Code of Ethics (2010), the Bay Pines Psychology Fellowship Training Program does not require Trainees to disclose personal information in program-related activities. At the same time, the program recognizes that self-reflection is an important part of the process and is a crucial aspect of developing multicultural competence. The program also acknowledges that developing insight into our own identities and personal histories is a delicate process – one that is best accomplished within a nurturing, non-judgmental context. The Multicultural Diversity Subcommittee along with the core Training Committee works to provide such an environment, with hopes that all will feel comfortable engaging in the self-reflection necessary to develop a meaningful appreciation for diversity in all its forms. In an effort to create a supportive and constructive learning environment, personal disclosures made by participants as part of their diversity training will be treated sensitively and respectfully AND by including all levels for facilitation, we hope to create working relationships in which everyone will feel safe exploring personal feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and life experiences that affect their multicultural competencies.

For further information about the Multicultural Diversity Sub Committee and Training Seminar, please contact the Co-Chairs by email:

Jennifer.Presnall-Shvorin@va.gov

Arian.Marquez@va.gov

Co-Chairs, Multicultural Diversity Sub Committee
Mental Health and Behavioral Science Service (116)

Physical Address:

C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center
Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
10000 Bay Pines Blvd
Bay Pines, FL 33744

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS

TRAINING MODEL

The Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Program at the Bay Pines VAHCS is committed to the mutual integration of science and practice by promoting a scientific attitude and approach to clinical activities. This approach to training is often referred to as the "Scholar-Practitioner" model (Peterson, et al, 1997; Hoshmand & Polkinghorne, 1992). The "local clinical scientist doing disciplined inquiry" is a descriptive term used to operationalize the mutual integration of science and practice. The Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Program is committed to an evidence-based model in the delivery of clinical care, clinical research, and professional teaching. We emphasize and demonstrate respect for the individual and diversity in the delivery of clinical care, clinical research, and professional teaching. We strive to provide Fellows with significant breadth and depth of experience working with a variety of clinical populations while simultaneously applying an approach utilizing scientific information in the conceptualization, assessment, and treatment of clinical problems. The Psychology Fellow is expected to spend 70% time in clinical service, 20% time in research, and 10% time attending didactics and providing teaching and supervision. Fellows will be encouraged to define their research activity in terms of involvement in projects already underway at Bay Pines VA Healthcare System.

We believe that teaching Fellows in clinical service, scholarly thinking, and clinical research design is best received and maintained within a "junior colleague" model of training. Our commitment to the Fellows' professional growth and scholastic development is conveyed in a supportive training atmosphere emphasizing individual strengths. Fellows are challenged to think critically, and encouraged toward full creative participation in all endeavors, scientific and clinical. A guiding principle in all aspects of service delivery within the program is respect and human dignity for our clients. We emphasize patients' rights, self-determination, and the right to choose, including the patient's right to adequate medical, psychological, educational, recreational, and other community services, the patient's right to family participation in treatment, and delivery of care with the utmost privacy in the least restrictive environment. We honor cultural, ethnic, sexual orientation and gender differences in our patients and deliver services accordingly.

Finally, we tailor our training to be consistent with the current climate of clinical practice and research. As we prepare students for practicing psychology in the new millennium, we are aware that Fellows must be trained for delivery of brief, empirically defensible treatments with a broad spectrum of patients. The Fellowship Program's didactics, symposia, and seminars are utilized effectively towards this end to inform and support the current model of clinical practice. Fellowship offers a window to the realities of clinical research and practice and we believe that the training that alerts Fellows to these external economic, social, and political forces is important for a successful career.

With the preceding in mind, The Fellowship Program operates utilizing the following principles: Emphasis on patient-centered care;

- Emphasis on goal-directed treatment and outcomes;
- Emphasis on maximizing individual strengths;
- Emphasis on self-respect and human dignity;
- Emphasis on the patient's right to adequate medical, psychological, housing, educational, recreational, and other community services;
- Emphasis on patient rights, self-determination, and right to choose;

- Emphasis on active patient and family participation in treatment and in the implementation of plans;
- Emphasis on culturally appropriate services;
- Emphasis on delivery of care in the least restrictive environment;
- Emphasis on the value of peer support and interaction;
- Commitment to personal growth and development.

To achieve these principles, the Fellowship Program assists Fellows in the following ways:

- First, we provide a structured, coherent, and integrated training program designed to develop clinically and academically well-rounded clinical psychologists.
- Second, we provide intensive and systematic training in the application of psychological principles to human problems and ensure clinical work with a variety of patients, techniques, and approaches. This provides an opportunity for Fellows to develop and refine adequacy in conceptual abilities, skills in interpersonal interactions such as therapeutic intervention, systematic observation of behavior, and psychological assessment; to develop values of professional responsibility and ethical behavior; and to integrate scholarly research findings in clinical practice.
- Next, we expose Fellows to a diversity of approaches to help them develop critically in their assessment of mental health issues.
- Fourth, we place emphasis on the Fellow's increasing responsibility for defining individualized training goals and assuming responsibility for major professional functions and patient care. We see as one of our major responsibilities to integrate the didactic learning with the practical knowledge and skills of the professional psychologist. Our major resource in this endeavor is the significant investment of enthusiasm, energy, and time of many doctoral psychologists, dedicated to the supervisory/training process.
- Fifth, we provide ample supervision throughout the Fellowship year in multiple different formats (i.e., individual, group, didactic, case conferences, etc.).
- Sixth, formal and informal teaching (seminars, lectures, etc.) are an integral component of the training program.

TRAINING AIM

The aim of the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System's Clinical Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program is to train fellows who will become licensed psychologists prepared to assume entry-level positions in a variety of healthcare settings, such as the public sector, academic settings, or medical centers. Our fellows will also have additional and more focused training in one area of emphasis, either Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or Substance Use Disorders, depending on the postdoctoral fellowship track for which you were accepted.

PROGRAM PROFESSION WIDE CORE COMPETENCIES

By the end of the training program, the fellows should have developed the full range of clinical psychology skills required for independent practice with demonstrated competence in a variety of clinical areas as defined by the competencies and elements outlined below. These competencies and elements were developed in concert with recognized clinical competencies defined by the American Psychological Association.

This Fellowship experience provides training to obtain competence in patient-centered practices as well as the nine (9) core areas of health service Psychology practice as outlined in the Standards of Accreditation from APA's Commission of Accreditation

Competency 1: Ethical and Legal Standards

Elements associated with this competency

- Knowledgeable of and act in accordance with each of the following:
 - the current version of the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct;
 - Relevant laws, regulations, rules, and policies governing health service psychology at the organizational, local, state, regional, and federal levels; and
 - Relevant professional standards and guidelines
- Recognize ethical dilemmas as they arise, and apply ethical decision-making processes to resolve the dilemmas
- Conduct self in an ethical manner in all professional activities

Competency 2: Integration of Science and Practice

Elements associated with this competency:

- Critical thinking in research/scholarly endeavors
- Time management and discipline in the use of scholarly/research time
- Works towards communicating findings of research/scholarly endeavors through poster presentations, professional papers, local or national presentations
- Awareness of and adherence to ethics in research/scholarly inquiry
- Integrates awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural diversity in research/scholarly work

Competency 3: Individual and Cultural Diversity

Elements associated with this competency:

- Understanding of how their own personal/cultural history, attitudes, and biases may affect how they understand and interact with people different from themselves.
- Knowledge of the current theoretical and empirical knowledge base as it relates to addressing diversity in all professional activities including research, training, supervision/consultation, and service.
- Ability to integrate awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural differences in the conduct of professional roles (e.g., research, services, and other professional activities). This includes the ability apply a framework for working effectively with areas of individual and cultural diversity not previously encountered over the course of their careers. Also included is the ability to work effectively with individuals whose group membership, demographic characteristics, or worldviews create conflict with their own.

- Demonstrate the ability to independently apply their knowledge and demonstrate effectiveness in working with the range of diverse individuals and groups encountered during residency, tailored to the learning needs and opportunities consistent with the program's aim
- Understanding of the unique issues facing Veterans

Competency 4: Professional Values, Attitudes and Behaviors

Elements associated with this competency:

- Receptive to supervision and life-long learning
- Is well prepared for supervisory meetings and use supervision effectively
- Appropriately manages boundaries in all professional contexts
- Awareness of own competence and limitations
- Recognizes how personal characteristics impact clinical work
- Concern for the welfare of others and their general well-being is evident in all professional contexts
- Possesses an appropriate level of confidence and has a sense of self as a "Psychologist"
- Is accountable, dependable, responsible, and shows initiative

Competency 5. Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Elements associated with this competency:

- Interact effectively with psychology staff and program leadership
- Oral, nonverbal, and written communication is clear and reflects a thorough grasp of professional language and concepts
- Form and maintain productive and respectful relationships with clients, peers/colleagues, supervisors, and professionals from other disciplines
- Understand diverse views in complicated interactions
- Establish effective interpersonal skills. Manage difficult interpersonal challenges and conflictual relationships
- Integrate awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural diversity in consultation and interpersonal contexts

Competency 6: Assessment

Elements associated with this competency:

- Diagnostic interviewing skills
- Differential diagnostic skills and knowledge of DSM-5
- Selects and/or applies assessment methods supported by the empirical literature
- Administration/scoring of psychological tests
- Interpretation of psychological tests
- Assesses risk for harm to self and others
- Clarity and conciseness of report writing
- Assessment case conceptualization
- Formulates appropriate recommendations
- Communication of results (e.g., patients, family members, other professionals)
- Integrates awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural diversity in assessment

Competency 7: Intervention

Elements associated with this competency:

- Address issues of confidentiality and informed consent
- Establish and maintain an effective therapeutic alliance
- Formulate a useful case conceptualization
- Effective and flexible application of therapeutic strategies informed by a range of variables including but not limited to the scientific literature, assessment findings, and diversity characteristics. This includes development of evidence-based intervention plans
- Manage expected workload pertaining to intervention
- Awareness and use of current literature and research in intervention
- Monitor or evaluates progress of intervention using appropriate measures or methods
- Integrate awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural diversity in intervention

Competency 8. Supervision

Elements associated with this competency:

- Knowledge and use of theory and the scientific literature in supervision
- Effectively identifies and addresses resistance and other challenges in supervisee
- Provides supportive and constructive feedback/guidance to supervisees
- Awareness of boundary issues and the power differential in supervisory relationship
- Integrate awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural diversity in providing supervision
- Awareness of, and adherence to ethics in providing supervision

Competency 9. Consultation and Interprofessional/Interdisciplinary Skills

Elements associated with this competency:

- Conduct consultations with skill and knowledge
- Work with individuals of other professions to maintain a climate of mutual respect and shared values regarding interprofessional practice. This includes appreciation and integration of contributions and perspectives of other professions.
- Use the knowledge of one's own role and those of other professions to appropriately assess and address (i.e., coordinate) the healthcare needs of the patients and populations served
- Communicate with patients, families, communities, and other health professionals in a responsive and responsible manner that supports a team approach to the maintenance of health and the treatment of disease
- Apply relationship-building values and the principles of team dynamics to perform effectively in different team roles to plan and deliver patient-/population- centered care that is safe, timely, efficient, effective, and equitable
- Integrate awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural diversity in consultation and interprofessional contexts.
- Awareness of and adherence to ethics in consultation and interprofessional contexts

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The didactic, research and clinical experiences of this program are designed to facilitate development of the professional attitudes, competencies, and personal resources essential to the

provision of high-quality patient care of contemporary psychological services. As mentors, the Bay Pines Training staff seek to demonstrate and encourage Intern participation in the professional roles of clinician, consultant, team member, supervisor, evaluator, researcher, and crisis intervener. The professional growth and development of Interns is enhanced by consistent supervision, varied clinical responsibilities with diverse patient populations, continued didactic training and opportunity for research, teaching and/or administrative/management involvement. All full-time Psychology Fellows are supported from August 2, 2020 through July 31, 2021. The organization of the Fellowship provides fellows access to different populations and an opportunity to assume a variety of roles. The Fellowship includes clinical, research, and educational components, described below (Table 1). There is a fair degree of flexibility in how each Fellow might design their training experience with their immediate supervisor's approval, consistent with their interests and training needs. Further, the Fellows benefit from opportunities for collegial learning and collaboration.

Clinical Training

Fellows are required to complete clinical activities in three core areas: assessment, intervention, and consultation. The distribution of time is determined jointly by the Fellow and the Training Program's faculty and will integrate the Fellow's training interests and needs.

Research Training

It has been our experience that Fellows value and benefit from a scientist-practitioner training program which encourages skillful use of the empirical literature and opportunities for collaborative or self-directed research. The research requirement allows for up to 8 hours per week of protected time. To meet the research requirement, Fellows will have the opportunity to collaborate with faculty on a program evaluation project, assist in ongoing research, and/or design and implement an independent research project under the mentoring of one faculty member. Fellows will be expected to provide a detailed, individualized research plan at the beginning of their Fellowship, design, propose and implement a well formulated research project with presentation of findings at local, regional, and/or national conventions. In addition, Fellows may also submit work for publication in an appropriate, peer reviewed journal. Fellows are required to serve on the Mental Health Research Committee, a monthly forum in which they will be able to select a research mentor, propose projects and provide updates on project status. Additional didactics on advanced statistical analysis will be available. Fellows are expected to conform to scheduled deadlines for approval of research plans, status updates, presentation at local and/or national conferences, and submission to peer-reviewed journals.

Supervision

Fellows will have the opportunity to supervise practicum students or predoctoral interns, as well as provide didactics to both practicum students and predoctoral interns. Fellows will supervise students in the three core areas of assessment, intervention, and consultation. Fellows will receive training and supervision by licensed clinical staff in all provision of trainee supervision. In addition, Fellows are required to attend the Supervision of Supervision didactic with psychology staff twice a month. Fellows will have the opportunity to discuss concerns/challenges/questions about their own supervision experiences in a collegial forum. Fellows may be asked to present, participate, or evaluate discussion about journal articles or other prepared topics. In addition, fellows will be required to attend the supervision training

program didactic at the onset of the fellowship year, prior to their provision of supervision to practicum students or predoctoral interns.

Based on the perspective that training in supervision is similar to training in psychotherapy, acquiring supervision competencies is a lifelong, cumulative, and developmental process. We recognize that attention to diversity in all of its forms relates to every aspect of the supervision process and requires specific competence. We recognize that attention to legal and ethical issues is essential. We recognize that training is influenced by both professional and personal factors, including beliefs, values, interpersonal biases, and conflicts that are considered sources of counter transference. We recognize that both self and peer assessment should occur regularly across all levels of supervisory development. We understand that ethical principles of psychologists require that psychologists who serve as supervisors have an ethical responsibility to acquire competence in supervision (Falendar, 2004).

Professional Development and Educational Offerings

Fellows are expected to attend weekly Mental Health Grand Rounds, with opportunity to attend additional weekly seminars in medical grand round format. Previous topics have included biofeedback with cancer patients, dementia and decision-making capacity, crisis intervention, therapeutic boundaries, and evidence-based therapies for PTSD. In these didactic settings, we develop a sense of professional community and peer support during the Fellowship training year. In addition, Fellows are further invited to join weekly psychology centered didactics taught by staff psychologist and guest lecturers. Fellows in turn, present at both the Mental Health Grand Rounds in a professional forum, and to the current Internship class on topics of choice related to development issues, leadership, ethics, diversity and ethnicity, and professional identity.

Fellows are expected to attend biweekly, 60-minute Research Journal-Club didactic; Fellows will attend this didactic with pre-doctoral Interns and members of staff. This forum involves an informal weekly gathering of Interns, Fellows, and professional staff to critically evaluate recent articles in the scientific literature. Fellows will be provided with instruction on how to search for and access peer reviewed journal articles through the Bay Pines VA On-line Library Services during their first week on site. In addition, they will be given a tour of the on-campus library facilities. For the remainder of the academic year, Fellows will rotate in selecting an article of interest and providing an electronic or hard copy to fellow participants for review prior to the next journal club meeting. The Fellows will then lead the discussion that can include but is not limited to the following: evaluation of research methodology/design and analysis employed by investigators, implications, and limitations thereof, cultural and ethnic factors, ecological validity, and considerations for treatment with identified populations. A Fellow (if a pre-doctoral intern is presenting) or a designated professional staff member (if a pre-doctoral intern or postdoctoral fellow is presenting) will participate in the group as both an active discussion participant and to provide supervisory guidance on meeting didactic objectives and inclusion of appropriate journal articles.

The Fellowship program has developed training experiences that are intended to assist the Fellow in gaining knowledge and skills in their area of specialization. These training experiences include didactic seminars, colloquia, symposia, co-therapy, role modeling, observation, case conferences, rounds, group supervision, and journal clubs. Also, when trainers are available, Fellows are given the opportunity to attend various specialized trainings related to Evidence Based Treatment for

patients with PTSD and anxiety disorders. For example, recent training opportunities have included Cognitive Processing Therapy, Prolonged Exposure, Motivational Interviewing, and Seeking Safety. A full summary of required and optional didactic/training activities is provided in the handbook all Fellows receive at the start of the training year.

TRAINING – GENERAL POSTDOCTORAL PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM TRACKS

PTSD/Women's Clinic Primary Care Mental Health Integration Track

Structurally, the Postdoctoral Training Program will consist of a six -month full-time (e.g., eight hours per day), combined rotation for the Stress Treatment Program (STP) and the Center for Sexual Trauma Services (CSTS) clinics, and a six-month full-time rotation in Primary Care/Women's Clinic. Residents will develop general clinical skills enabling them to work with different patient populations as well as special emphasis in gender-specific issues and strategies in the treatment of women Veterans with PTSD. Fellows will work in the Women's Clinic, focusing on treatment of women with various presenting problems, including medical problems, interpersonal problems, and characterological issues in a Primary Care Mental Health Integration setting. In addition, fellows will work with Veterans with sexual trauma and Veterans with war-related trauma during the combined CSTS and STP rotation. Postdoctoral Residents define goals to acquire additional training in empirically validated treatments including Cognitive Processing Therapy, Prolonged Exposure, Seeking Safety and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

In all settings, the post-doctoral resident will participate in interdisciplinary team meetings, serve as a consultant to both mental health and medical staff, develop expertise in PTSD assessment, engage in the full range of clinical interventions with a focus on evidence-based practices, work on performance improvement initiatives, complete program evaluation and/or research activities, and provide education, training, and supervision. In addition, residents are required to complete a research or program development project during their training year.

Table 1. Visual Presentation of Clinical/Research/Didactic Activities (NOTE: the below clinical duties will be reversed in order for one of the Fellows, allowing both Fellows to alternate rotations and be fully involved in each rotation during the 6-month periods)

SEPTEMBER-FEBRUARY	MARCH-AUGUST
70% CLINICAL DUTIES - 100% Women's Clinic/PCMHI - 3 hours face-to-face supervision - 2 hours treatment team meetings <i>Required:</i> Weekly pre-licensure group supervision (1 hour)	70% CLINICAL DUTIES - 100% Stress Treatment and Center for Sexual Trauma Services (combined) - 3 hours face-to-face supervision - 5 hours treatment team meetings <i>Required:</i> Weekly pre-licensure group supervision (1 hour)

<p>20% RESEARCH & SCHOLARLY INQUIRY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selection of research mentor - Approval of MH Education & Research Committee of Individualized research plan - Research project proposal - IRB submission and approval - Data collection/lit review <p><i>Required:</i> Monthly attendance of MH Research Committee meeting</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Bi-monthly advanced statistics seminar didactic</p>	<p>20% RESEARCH & SCHOLARLY INQUIRY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data analysis - Abstract submission to a national conference - Write-up and possible submission to peer-reviewed research journal - Presentation of findings to MH Education & Research Committee and/or Training Committee <p><i>Required:</i> Monthly attendance of MH Research Committee meeting</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Bi-monthly advanced statistics seminar didactic</p>
<p>10 % DIDACTIC/TEACHING</p> <p><i>Required:</i> Attend weekly Mental Health Grand Round seminar, attend monthly Training Committee meeting, attend weekly Research-Journal Club meeting</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Attend weekly Medical Grand Round Seminar, attend weekly Neuropsychology-Assessment seminar, supervision of pre-doctoral psychology Interns</p> <p><i>As available:</i> Additional training opportunities in EBT (e.g., ACT, PE, MI), supervision/mentoring on EPPP, licensure and job search</p>	<p>10 % DIDACTIC/TEACHING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental Health Grand Round Presentation <p><i>Required:</i> Attend weekly Mental Health Grand Round seminar, attend monthly Training Committee meeting, attend weekly Research-Journal Club meeting</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Attend weekly Medical Grand Round Seminar, attend weekly Neuropsychology-Assessment seminar, supervision of pre-doctoral psychology Interns</p> <p><i>As available:</i> Additional training opportunities in EBT (e.g., ACT, PE, MI), supervision/mentoring on EPPP, licensure and job search</p>

Women's Clinic Rotation

Supervisor: Kathryn Michael, Ph.D.

1. Patient population: The patients are primarily women Veterans. A small number of Champ VA-eligible women and active duty and reservist women are seen in the clinic. The women

range in age from early 20's to elderly women who receive Primary Care services and/or gender-specific medical care in this setting.

2. Psychology's role in the setting: Provision of general and gender-specific mental health services by the psychologist assigned to Primary Care.
3. Other professional and trainees in the setting: Physicians, social worker, nursing staff, pharmacist, clerical staff. The Women's Clinic is managed by the Women Veterans Program Manager who is responsible for assuring that women Veterans receive appropriate and gender-sensitive care throughout the facility.
4. Nature of clinical services delivered: The emphasis of the rotation is on the provision of gender-specific and evidence-based psychotherapy for the treatment of a variety of mental health disorders and behavioral health issues within a primary care setting for women. An integrated model of service delivery is used in this setting that takes advantage of the multidisciplinary team, the co-location of medical and mental health staff, and the expertise in gender-specific care. Mental health care always begins with thorough assessment and collaborative treatment planning. Primarily individual therapy is offered, but group, couples, and family therapy may also be used.
5. Fellow's role in the setting: The Fellows are a part of the multidisciplinary team and provide the full range of mental health services. The Fellows are frequently called on for informal and formal consultation, especially in complex cases with co-morbid mental health and medical problems. They complete evaluations, objective assessments, treatment planning, psychotherapy, and psychoeducation. They may also be involved in developing additional programs and services for the patient population, teaching and training other clinicians, program evaluation projects, and research.
6. Amount/type of supervision: Formal weekly supervision is provided. There are also multiple opportunities for additional supervision and consultation with the supervisor and others regarding specific cases and general issues related to treatment of mental health and behavioral health problems. In addition, the supervisor often works with the Fellows on preparing presentations for local and national audiences, research, and program evaluation activities.
7. Didactics in the setting: A bi-monthly conference (presentations and case discussions) is held in the Women's Clinic and is open to staff from several disciplines. Occasional in-services on topics of special interest are scheduled.
8. Pace: Patients are scheduled during open clinic hours with time allotted for preparation and documentation. Requests to see walk-ins and requests for brief consultation with staff are reasonably frequent. Documentation is expected to be completed in a timely fashion.

Since June of 1988, the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System has operated a special clinic to address the unique needs of women Veterans. This "Well Women's Clinic" was created to promote the periodic health screening and maintenance programs for eligible women. That original program has expanded over the years into a full primary care clinic co-located with the

specialty care clinics pertinent to women's health care on the Bay Pines campus. The Bay Pines Women's Clinic, where comprehensive women's health care is the focus, is currently staffed with three full time primary care physicians, four nursing staff (two RNs, one LPN and one Health Technician), a full time Doctor of Pharmacy with special experience in women's health, a social worker, and the clerical support staff. In addition, Breast Clinic is held one day per week by a General Surgeon with special training in breast care, and GYN Clinic is held two days each week. GYN surgery is also done at the Bay Pines campus. Maternity care is provided through a fee-for-service arrangement with community obstetricians, in collaboration with the Fee Basis Office.

The Fellows work with the Women's Clinic four full days per week for one six-month rotation in order to maintain a focus on gender-specific issues in treatment and to develop ongoing interdisciplinary and collaborative relationships with the Women's Clinic staff. The Women's Clinic rotation provides experiences with a diverse population of women who present with a wide range of issues including a history of trauma, behavioral health concerns, adjustment issues, and a variety of mental health concerns. Co-morbid psychiatric disorders and concurrent medical problems are common, and the women Veterans also frequently have complex psychosocial issues. This necessitates competence in several evidence-based psychotherapies and other adjunctive interventions.

PTSD Rotation – STP/PCT and CSTS components

A. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Residential Treatment Program (STP) & Outpatient Clinical Team (PCT)

Supervisor: Leona (Brooke) McCurry Psy.D.

1. Patient population: The population for both programs are men and women (Veterans, Active-Duty personnel and Reservists) with military PTSD, many of whom have additional comorbid diagnosis (i.e., Substance abuse, Traumatic Brain Injury, Depression, Panic Disorder, etc.). The Veteran population consists of individuals who have served in WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War, Persian Gulf War, Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OIF/OEF/OND) as well as other areas of conflict (Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Lebanon Korea, etc.). Both programs provide assessment and psychotherapy to individuals with a wide range of traumatic experiences.
2. Psychology's role in the setting: Psychologists are an integral part of an interdisciplinary treatment team primarily providing direct patient care, consultation, and supervision of students.
3. Other professionals and trainees in the setting: Post-doc Fellows, psychology Interns, psychiatric residents, nurse practitioner, social work, and nursing students.
4. Nature of clinical services delivered: The six-month rotation emphasizes empirically supported treatments for PTSD such as Prolonged Exposure (PE), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Motivational Interviewing (MI), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Seeking Safety in both the outpatient and residential treatment programs. Furthermore, RTP offers psycho-educational classes, psychiatric services, individual and group psychotherapy as well as case management.

5. Fellow's role in the setting: Each Fellow will function as an important member of the interdisciplinary team and will provide a variety of clinical services. These services include case conceptualization, treatment planning, consultations, individual and group psychotherapy, psychoeducation classes, and supervision of psychology Interns.
6. Amount of supervision: A minimum of one hour per week of individual supervision will be provided along with several opportunities for in-vivo supervision through co-facilitating various groups with one's supervisor.
7. Pace: Fellow's case load will be determined at the onset of the rotation and this will depend on the Fellow's areas of interest and level of skill. Fellows are expected to complete all paperwork (assessments, individual and group progress notes, treatment plans, etc.) within 24 hours of providing the service.

This portion of the PTSD rotation provides an excellent opportunity to individuals who are interested in developing an expertise in the area of combat-related PTSD. Presently, the majority of the patients are males who served in the Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan; however, we are beginning to see more women who were deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan. Every effort will be made for the Fellow to work with as varied a population as possible (i.e., women Veterans, Veterans with co-occurring psychiatric problems, Veterans from various eras). Fellows are active members of the treatment team for both the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team (PCT) and residential treatment program. The PCT provides outpatients services (assessment, medication management and psychotherapy) to a wide range of military related traumatic experiences. The residential program is a 14 bed, rolling admission program with a varying length of stay (approximately four to six weeks) depending on the individual patient's needs. In both programs the Fellow will have the opportunity to participate in program development as well as be exposed to several evidence-based treatments such as Prolonged Exposure, Cognitive Processing Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, Seeking Safety and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

B. Center for Sexual Trauma Services Program

Supervisor: John Berg, Ph.D., ABPP

1. Patient population: Female and male Veterans, reservists, active-duty personnel with PTSD secondary to sexual trauma. Patients are seen in residential or outpatient setting. Focus of the residential program is on patients who have been unable to resolve military sexual trauma (MST) issues and symptoms by traditional outpatient care. Participants range in period of service from Korean Conflict through OIF/OEF/OND. Currently we are seeing an increasing number of OIF/OEF/OND females, many of whom have experienced both MST and combat-related trauma.
2. Psychology's role in the setting: Program management, member of interdisciplinary treatment team, clinical services provider, supervision and training of psychology Interns and postdoctoral Fellows.

3. Other professionals and trainees in the setting: Psychiatrist, Nursing Staff, Social Workers, Recreational Therapists.
4. Nature of clinical services delivered: Program utilizes evidence-based treatments such as core CBT modalities, Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Prolonged Exposure (PE), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Dialectic Behavioral Therapy skills, Seeking Safety, and Motivational Interviewing techniques. Treatment consists of group and individual psychotherapy, psychoeducational classes, community meetings, and case management.
5. Fellow's role in the setting: Fellow will have the role of Primary Mental Health Provider to a discrete number of patients and provide psychodiagnostic evaluations and psychosocial assessments, treatment plans, and discharge summaries. The Fellow will function as a member of the interdisciplinary treatment team and will assist with case conceptualization, treatment planning, provision of clinical services, and case management. The Fellow will learn to conceptualize the effects of trauma from a variety of theoretical perspectives, including cognitive-behavioral approaches. Fellow will have the opportunity to co-facilitate and individually lead therapy groups and conduct individual CPT and PE and become familiar with a variety of leading therapeutic technologies (PE, CPT, ACT, DBT Skills, and Seeking Safety). Fellow will have the opportunity to provide supervision to Psychology Interns and participate in the annual MST training offered for MST providers nationwide.
6. Supervision: Fellow is provided with a minimum of one-hour weekly individual supervision as well as ongoing opportunity for in-vivo supervision within the therapeutic community via group therapy, the community milieu, and treatment team meetings.
7. Didactics: Attendance of annual MST training for clinical providers and occasional in-service trainings by clinical staff.
8. Pace: Fellow's case load will be determined at the onset of the rotation and this will depend on the Fellow's areas of interest and level of skill. Fellows are expected to complete all paperwork (assessments, individual and group progress notes, treatment plans, etc.) within 24 hours of providing the service.

CSTS is a nationally recognized program that focuses exclusively on the treatment of sexual trauma. The program opened in 2000 on an Innovative Programs grant and was the first residential program in the country to focus solely on women with MST. The CSTS program is the recipient of the HERA Award and was designated as a center for excellence as a part of the Women's Program.

The rotation offers a setting where the Fellow can develop, refine, and expand clinical skills. The clinical population is complex, with the majority of patients presenting with co-morbid disorders and multiple traumatic events that include military sexual trauma, childhood sexual trauma, and other adult sexual and physical abuse. The complexity of patients and the intensity of the program ensure that Fellows acquire the in-depth experience necessary for the acquisition of expertise in working with PTSD. Fellows will acquire and practice EBT

interventions and learn to function effectively on an interdisciplinary treatment team in the treatment of chronic and/or complex PTSD.

The CSTS program is structured so that patients without prior PTSD treatment are provided with education regarding effects of PTSD and taught basic coping skills. The program also specifically focuses on treating sexual trauma with exposure-based modalities (PE, CPT) while managing the thoughts, feelings, and physiological symptoms that these interventions evoke.

SATP/Mental Health Clinic Track

Structurally, the Postdoctoral Training Program will consist of a six-month full-time (e.g., eight hours per day), rotation in the Mental Health Clinic (MHC), and a six-month full-time rotation in the Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SATP). Residents will develop general clinical skills enabling them to work with a number of patient populations as well as special emphasis in strategies in the treatment of substance abuse. Fellows will also work in the MHC, focusing on treatment of Veterans with various presenting problems, including medical problems, interpersonal problems, and characterological issues. In addition, fellows will work with Veterans with various substance abuse and co-occurring diagnoses during the SATP rotation. Postdoctoral Residents define goals to acquire additional training in empirically validated treatments including Motivational Interviewing and Motivational Enhancement, the Matrix Model, Cognitive Processing Therapy, Exposure and Response Prevention, Seeking Safety, and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

In all settings, the post-doctoral resident will participate in interdisciplinary team meetings, serve as a consultant to both mental health and medical staff, develop expertise in substance abuse assessment, engage in the full range of clinical interventions with a focus on evidence-based practices, work on performance improvement initiatives, complete program evaluation and/or research activities, and provide education, training, and supervision. In addition, residents are required to complete a research or program development project during their training year.

Table 2. Visual Presentation of Clinical/Research/Didactic Activities (NOTE: the below clinical duties will be reversed in order for one of the Fellows, allowing both Fellows to alternate rotations and be fully involved in each rotation during the 6-month periods)

SEPTEMBER-FEBRUARY	MARCH-AUGUST
70% CLINICAL DUTIES - 100% SATP - 3 hours face-to-face supervision - 1 hour treatment team meetings <i>Required: Weekly pre-licensure group supervision (1 hour)</i>	70% CLINICAL DUTIES - 100% MHC - 3 hours face-to-face supervision - 3 hours treatment team meetings <i>Required: Weekly pre-licensure group supervision (1 hour)</i>
20% RESEARCH & SCHOLARLY INQUIRY	20% RESEARCH & SCHOLARLY INQUIRY

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selection of research mentor - Approval of MH Education & Research Committee of Individualized research plan - Research project proposal - IRB submission and approval - Data collection/lit review <p><i>Required:</i> Monthly attendance of MH Research Committee meeting</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Bi-monthly advanced statistics seminar didactic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data analysis - Abstract submission to a national conference - Write-up and possible submission to peer-reviewed research journal - Presentation of findings to MH Education & Research Committee and/or Training Committee <p><i>Required:</i> Monthly attendance of MH Research Committee meeting</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Bi-monthly advanced statistics seminar didactic</p>
<p>10 %</p> <p>DIDACTIC/TEACHING</p> <p><i>Required:</i> Attend weekly Mental Health Grand Round seminar, attend monthly Training Committee meeting, attend weekly Research-Journal Club meeting</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Attend weekly Medical Grand Round Seminar, attend weekly Neuropsychology-Assessment seminar, supervision of pre-doctoral psychology Interns</p> <p><i>As available:</i> Additional training opportunities in EBT (e.g., ACT, PE, MI), supervision/mentoring on EPPP, licensure and job search</p>	<p>10 %</p> <p>DIDACTIC/TEACHING</p> <p>- Mental Health Grand Round Presentation</p> <p><i>Required:</i> Attend weekly Mental Health Grand Round seminar, attend monthly Training Committee meeting, attend weekly Research-Journal Club meeting</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Attend weekly Medical Grand Round Seminar, attend weekly Neuropsychology-Assessment seminar, supervision of pre-doctoral psychology Interns</p> <p><i>As available:</i> Additional training opportunities in EBT (e.g., ACT, PE, MI), supervision/mentoring on EPPP, licensure and job search</p>

Substance Abuse Treatment Program Rotation

Supervisors: Rafael Harris, Jr., Psy.D. and Daniel Philip, Ph.D.

1. Patient population: Female and male Veterans, reservists, active-duty personnel with one or more substance abuse diagnoses. Patients seen in SATP also often have one or more co-

occurring, dual diagnosis mental health disorders. Patients are seen in In- and Outpatient settings.

2. Psychology's role in the setting: Program management, member of interdisciplinary treatment team, clinical services provider, supervision and training of pre-doctoral psychology interns and postdoctoral fellows.
3. Other professionals and trainees in the setting: Psychiatrists, Nursing Staff, Social Workers, Recreational Therapists, License Mental Health Counselors, Addiction Therapists.
4. Nature of clinical services delivered: Program utilizes evidence-based treatments such as core CBT modalities, Motivational Interviewing and Enhancement, the Matrix Model, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). Treatment consists of group and individual psychotherapy, psychoeducational classes, and case management.
5. Fellow's role in the setting: Fellow will have the role of Primary Mental Health Provider to a discrete number of patients and provide psychodiagnostic evaluations and psychosocial assessments, treatment plans, and discharge summaries. The Fellow will function as a member of the interdisciplinary treatment team and will assist with case conceptualization, treatment planning, provision of clinical services, and case management. The Fellow will learn to conceptualize the nature of substance abuse and pathology from a variety of theoretical perspectives, including cognitive-behavioral approaches. The Fellow will have the opportunity to co-facilitate and individually lead therapy groups and conduct individual therapy as well as become familiar with a variety of leading therapeutic technologies (MI, ME, Matrix Model, ACT). Fellow will have the opportunity to provide supervision to Psychology Interns.
6. Supervision: Fellow is provided with a minimum of one-hour weekly individual supervision as well as ongoing opportunity for in-vivo supervision within the therapeutic community via group therapy, and treatment team meetings.
7. Didactics: Periodic in-service trainings by clinical staff.
8. Pace: Fellow's case load will be determined at the onset of the rotation and this will depend on the Fellow's areas of interest and level of skill. Fellows are expected to complete all paperwork (assessments, individual and group progress notes, treatment plans, etc.) within 24 hours of providing the service.

The rotation offers a setting where the Fellow can develop, refine, and expand clinical skills. The clinical population varies in complexity, with many patients presenting with co-morbid disorders and traumatic events that include childhood sexual trauma and other adult sexual and physical abuse. The complexity of patients and the intensity of the program ensure that Fellows acquire the in-depth experience necessary for the acquisition of expertise in working with a substance abuse and wide range of other presenting diagnoses. Fellows will acquire and practice EBT interventions and learn to function effectively on an interdisciplinary treatment team in the treatment of acute and/or chronic mental illness.

Mental Health Clinic Rotation

Supervisors: Mirela (Adina) Aldea, Ph.D. and Denise Makowski, Psy.D.

1. Patient population: Female and male Veterans, reservists, active-duty personnel with diagnoses running the gamut of the DSM-5. Patients are seen in an Outpatient setting.
2. Psychology's role in the setting: Program management, member of interdisciplinary treatment team, clinical services provider, supervision and training of psychology Interns and postdoctoral Fellows.
3. Other professionals and trainees in the setting: Psychiatrists, Nursing Staff, Social Workers, Recreational Therapists, License Mental Health Counselors.
4. Nature of clinical services delivered: Program utilizes evidence-based treatments such as core CBT modalities, Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Dialectic Behavioral Therapy (DBT) skills, Seeking Safety, and Motivational Interviewing techniques. Treatment consists of group and individual psychotherapy, psychoeducational classes, and case management.
5. Fellow's role in the setting: Fellow will have the role of Primary Mental Health Provider to a discrete number of patients and provide psychodiagnostic evaluations and psychosocial assessments, treatment plans, and discharge summaries. The Fellow will function as a member of the interdisciplinary treatment team and will assist with case conceptualization, treatment planning, provision of clinical services, and case management. The Fellow will learn to conceptualize the nature of pathology from a variety of theoretical perspectives, including cognitive-behavioral approaches. The Fellow will have the opportunity to co-facilitate and individually lead therapy groups and conduct individual therapy as well as become familiar with a variety of leading therapeutic technologies (CPT, ACT, DBT Skills, and Seeking Safety). Fellow will have the opportunity to provide supervision to Psychology Interns.
6. Supervision: Fellow is provided with a minimum of one-hour weekly individual supervision as well as ongoing opportunity for in-vivo supervision within the therapeutic community via group therapy, and treatment team meetings.
7. Didactics: Periodic in-service trainings by clinical staff.
8. Pace: Fellow's case load will be determined at the onset of the rotation and this will depend on the Fellow's areas of interest and level of skill. Fellows are expected to complete all paperwork (assessments, individual and group progress notes, treatment plans, etc.) within 24 hours of providing the service.

The rotation offers a setting where the Fellow can develop, refine, and expand clinical skills. The clinical population varies in complexity, with many patients presenting with co-morbid disorders and traumatic events that include childhood sexual trauma and other adult sexual and physical abuse. The complexity of patients and the intensity of the program ensure that Fellows acquire the in-depth experience necessary for the acquisition of expertise in working

with a wide range of presenting diagnoses. Fellows will acquire and practice EBT interventions and learn to function effectively on an interdisciplinary treatment team in the treatment of acute and/or chronic mental illness.

SUPERVISION AND TRAINING METHODS TO ACCOMPLISH PROGRAM AIMS AND COMPETENCIES

Within this learning/teaching environment, Fellows are expected to provide clinical services to patients and spend the majority (80%) of their time in the clinical area to which they are assigned (i.e., clinical rotation). The rationale for this expectation is that training is best accomplished when Fellows are “immersed” in a patient care area. The environment provides opportunities for socialization into the profession and facilitates a stronger identification with roles of a variety of health care professionals. Informal or “curb-side” consults are frequent and informative. Opportunities for observation and indirect learning are plentiful. Fellows are expected to become functional members of the treatment team and to develop a refined appreciation for the skills and contributions made by various disciplines on the team.

The majority of clinical activities of Fellows are supervised by the licensed, Primary Staff Psychologist/Supervisor to whom the Fellow is assigned. The Bay Pines Training Program also adheres to a Vertical Supervision Model. It is thus common for Fellows to also provide direct supervision to a predoctoral intern working in a particular program. All such Vertical Supervision assignments are conducted under the umbrella of the licensed, Primary Supervisor. As a minimum requirement, each Fellow will participate in four (4) hours of supervision per week. Typically, two hours are regularly scheduled, face-to-face, individual supervision with the licensed, Primary Rotation Supervisor(s) and one hour is group supervision with the Training Director. The additional hour consists of a structured learning activity, or additional face-to-face, individual supervision with the Primary Supervisor. Fellows can expect to also receive supervision from independently licensed interdisciplinary supervisors with whom they work on specific rotations that is over and above the (4) + hours received through Psychology Service.

COMPETENCY BASED EVALUATION SYSTEM

The basic goal of the Fellowship program is to promote the professional development of Fellows in each of the Foundational Profession Wide (Core) Competency areas so that upon completion of the program, Fellows are ready to assume the responsibilities of an entry level staff Psychology position or advanced postdoctoral residency position. The focus of training is on acquiring and enhancing knowledge, skills, and self-knowledge related to treating a diverse range of adults. The core modalities used to train Fellows are supervised clinical experiences, didactic seminars, experiential supervision, engagement in research and journal club, EBT and case presentations, case conferences and rounds, interdisciplinary team meetings and involvement in a health care environment.

Competency measurement and evaluation is completed throughout the year. Our intention is to make evaluation of Fellows’ progress timely, open, fair, and part of the learning process. Fellows are included in all phases of evaluation from the initial agreement with training goals through the final evaluation. Ongoing verbal feedback from Primary Supervisors during rotations occurs regularly, and Fellows should request clarification from Supervisors if they are uncertain about their progress.

At the onset of each clinical rotation, the assigned Primary Supervisor will assess baseline competencies through direct observation to determine the appropriate level of graduated responsibility and any specific areas requiring additional modeling, education, or remediation. The Primary Supervisor will also complete a written evaluation at the mid-point and completion of the rotation to assess progress and achievement of competencies. Fellows will evaluate the rotation and Supervisor at the same points in time. A Fellow has the opportunity to review, comment on, and disagree with the evaluation before s/he signs it. Similarly, Fellows formally evaluate each rotation and clinical supervisor(s) biannually and the entire training experience at the end of the Fellowship year.

It is our goal to create a supportive and challenging learning environment in which individual differences are respected and professional development is enhanced and enriched. We believe one critical factor in the development of this environment is open, direct, honest communication between Fellow and the Supervisor and the development of a friendly, professional interpersonal relationship. Supervisors/Fellows are encouraged to meet frequently in more informal work settings. The Supervisors are expected to help Fellows become socialized into the profession and BPVAHCS environment (e.g., attend/participate in a variety of service level meetings, educational presentations/seminars held on campus, discuss roles of psychologists, discuss the political environment, discuss policies and procedures memos, introduce Fellows to Bay Pines staff, etc.).

PROFESSION WIDE COMPETENCIES EVALUATION

The competency ratings used in our program are based on the amount of supervision that is required for the Fellow to perform the task competently. This rating scale is intended to reflect the developmental progression toward becoming an early career psychologist, ready to enter into the VA system at a GS-12 level.

In accord with VHA Handbook 1400.04 Supervision of Associated Health Trainees and its supervision requirements related to Graduated Levels of Responsibility for safe and effective care of Veterans, we evaluate Fellows based on their ability to perform professional activities within the context of the following assigned Graduated Levels of Responsibility (GLR):

Room. The supervising practitioner (SP) is physically present in the same room while the trainee is engaged in health care services.

Area. The SP is in the same physical area and is immediately accessible to the trainee. SP meets and interacts with Veteran as needed. Trainee and SP discuss, plan, or review evaluation or treatment. Area supervision is available only when the trainee has formally been assigned a Graduated Level of Responsibility commensurate with this type of supervision.

Available. Services furnished by trainee under SP's guidance. SP's presence is not required during the provision of services. SP available immediately by phone or pager and able to be physically present as needed. This type of supervision is permissible only when the trainee has formally been assigned a Graduated Level of Responsibility commensurate with this type of supervision.

There are 5 possible rating levels depicting how much Supervision is required for the Fellow to perform the professional activity or task competently. They are as follows:

1 Performance at the Entry-Mid Level of the Predoctoral Intern: Resident exhibits **Novice** Core, Program Specific and Specialty Competencies (basic knowledge, skills, and abilities with limited experience). Requires close supervision for most clinical activities or circumstances. The most commonly assigned level of responsibility (GLR) is **Room** (direct observation and modeling). This is the most common rating during internship. Close supervision is generally needed.

2 Performance at the Mid-Exit Level of the Predoctoral Intern: Resident exhibits **Novice** Core, Program Specific and Specialty Competencies (basic knowledge, skills, and abilities with limited experience). Requires close supervision for unfamiliar clinical activities and/or novel circumstances. The most commonly assigned level of responsibility (GLR) is **Area**; However, **Room** (direct observation and modeling) may be required for complex or new experiences. This is the most common rating during internship. Routine and/or close supervision is generally needed.

3 Performance at the Entry Level of the Resident: Resident exhibits **Intermediate/Advanced** Core, Program Specific and **Intermediate/Advanced** Specialty Competencies (able to practically apply and generalize knowledge, skills, and abilities) across clinical activities and settings. Resident can engage in routine clinical activities with minimal structure but may need closer supervision for more complex situations. The most common (GLR) assigned level or responsibility is **Area or Available**; direct observation and modeling is infrequently required. Common rating at the end of internship through Mid evaluation period of a Resident. Routine supervision of most activities is indicated.

4 Performance at the Mid-Year Level Resident: Resident exhibits **Advanced** Core competences and Program specific and Specialty Competencies. That is, consistently integrates and applies knowledge, skills, and abilities into all aspects of professional service-delivery. Resident can engage in less familiar clinical activities, and function proactively and independently in most contexts. Resident is prepared for entry level practice and professional licensure. The assigned level of responsibility is **Available**; immediate access (**Area**) is only needed for very complicated cases. Generalist competencies attained in all but non-routine cases; supervisor provides overall management of trainee's activities; depth of supervision varies as clinical needs warrant, but still in full compliance with supervision requirements outlined in VHA Handbook 1400.04 Supervision of Associated Health Residents.

5 Performance at the Exit Level of the Resident: Skills exhibited at the Exit period of the residency year represent **Mastery/Independence** of Core and Program Specific Competences. Rating expected at completion of Residency training is comparable to autonomous practice at the licensure level/full staff privilege level in Core and Program Specific Competencies. However, as an unlicensed trainee, supervision is required while in training status. Assigned level of responsibility for this activity would be limited to **Available**.

INTERPROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS

While the majority of training occurs within the clinical rotation, Fellows spend 10% of their time involved in a series of structured learning activities to further facilitate competency attainment

(e.g., weekly, and bi-weekly didactics and seminars, monthly administrative, research or diversity committee meetings, and annual workshops).

1. General Fellow Didactic (Required):

This weekly seminar covers a broad range of clinical and professional development topics selected to address specific competencies as well as the multiple roles of the contemporary health service Psychologist. Various teaching methods are employed including didactic instruction, live demonstrations, videotapes, video-tele conference, discussions, and assigned readings. Topics related to professional and ethical development and diversity issues will receive particular emphasis during this time. Previous topics have included:

- Military Basics
- Suicide Assessment and Operation Life
- The Baker Act (Involuntary Hospitalization)
- Job Hunting Strategies
- Job Interviewing Strategies
- Advocacy and Involvement in Regional and/or National Organizations
- Ethical Intervention within a Complex Medical System
- Working with LGBT Veterans
- Prescription Privileges for Psychologists
- Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE)
- Evidence Based Practices
- Working with Hispanic Veterans
- Lab Values for Psychologists
- Clinical Informatics
- Military Sexual Trauma (MST)
- Psychopharmacology
- Licensure Preparation
- ABPP - Board Certification
- How to Build a Private Practice
- Sexual Harassment & Bystander Interventions at the VA

2. Mental Health Grand Rounds (Required)/Medical Grand Rounds (Optional):

Fellows are required to attend the weekly Mental Health Grand Rounds and encouraged to attend weekly Medical Grand Rounds. Medical Grand Rounds are facilitated by a variety of disciplines, including topics pertinent to Neurology, Cardiology, Oncology, Rheumatology, Pharmacy, Psychiatry, Speech Language Pathology, Dietary Service, and others. Mental Health Service Grand Rounds are presented by staff Psychiatrists, Psychologists, and Psychology Residents and have included the following previous topics:

- “The Power of One” Pathophysiology of Delirium
- Exploring the Former Prisoner of War Experience
- Lethality Assessment & Harm Prevention
- In-Roads in Suicide Prevention
- Update on Clinical Practice Guidelines
- Sleep Disorders and PTSD
- Assessment of Alcohol Use Disorders and Medication-Assisted Treatment
- Parkinson’s Disease and Psychiatric Symptoms

- Death and Dying: End of Life Issues & Care
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Relevance in the Veteran Population
- Conversion Disorder: Functional Neurology Symptom Disorder
- Identifying Patents with Mild Cognitive Impairment and Dementia of the Alzheimer's Type (DAT)
- An Evaluation of Burnout Among Mental Health Providers Within the VA
- Toward a Better Understanding Difficult Patients
- Difficult Provider-Patient Interactions
- Cognitive Flexibility and Experiential Avoidance in Veterans with PTSD and Substance Use
- Conversion Disorder: Functional Neurological Symptom Disorder
- Eating Disorder-Update

3. Psychology Research Journal Club (Required):

The Research Journal-Club didactic is held bi-weekly and involves an informal, weekly gathering of interns, Residents, Practicum students and professional staff to critically evaluate recent peer reviewed articles in the scientific literature. The first week, Residents will be provided with instruction on how to critically review an article and how to search for and access peer reviewed journal articles through the Bay Pines VA On-line Library Services (e.g., Ebsco databases: MEDLINE, CINAHL, PSYCHINFO).

For the rest of the academic year, Interns and Residents will rotate in selecting an article of interest and providing an electronic pdf, or hard copy to participants for review prior to the next journal club meeting. The Intern/Resident will then lead the discussion that can include but is not limited to: evaluation of research methodology/design and analysis employed by investigators, implications and limitations thereof, cultural and ethnic factors, clinical application, ecological validity, and considerations for treatment with identified populations. TC Staff will rotate in joining this journal club and will provide immediate written feedback on facilitation that will be factored into the General Postdoctoral Psychology Competency Evaluation.

In addition, every 4th Journal Club, the topic will focus on developing competencies in the practice/provision of Clinical Supervision. Interns and Residents will be required to present a journal article utilizing the same format as all the other Journal Clubs on a Clinical Supervision topic.

4. Multicultural Diversity (MCD) Didactic Seminar (Required):

Multicultural competence is a broad and multifaceted aspiration that requires commitment to a lifelong learning process, which can incorporate awareness of diversity issues, knowledge of cultural variation, clinical application of skills relevant to individual differences, and community advocacy and outreach. This monthly seminar is attended by Interns, Residents and Training Committee staff. It is intended to support continued development of multicultural competence by fostering an appreciation for culture and individual differences among clinicians; developing insight into clinicians' own multicultural identity and the limits of one's worldview, an understanding of multiculturalism; facilitating better care to Veterans served by addressing cultural components of difficult cases; and creating a rich learning environment for continued progress toward multicultural competency. During this seminar, self-exploration and an openness to personal growth is strongly encouraged, supported, and modeled. Each seminar is led by a triad of facilitators at each level of professional development (Intern, Resident and Career/Staff) to

explore a variety of topics relevant to specific patient populations and to the promotion of multicultural competence. This may include formal didactics, or administrative discussion on exploring new initiatives/activities to promote the need of our training community. On occasion, cultural immersion experiences may be pre-arranged, intended to build awareness in areas relevant to work with VA populations, followed by group debriefing of the experience and a discussion on how our own cultural identities, biases, and values may match or deviate from others. This seminar is coordinated by the Multicultural Diversity Sub Committee, whose mission is to promote cultural competence, self-awareness, and appreciation of other viewpoints in training and health care provision, and to foster acceptance and a culture of safety across the facility at large.

5.Ethics and Legal Issues in Training (Required):

This monthly seminar is attended by Interns, Residents and Training Committee staff. It is intended to support continued development in ethical decision making and understanding of applicable laws guiding our practice and interaction with trainees. By participating in this structured learning activity, Residents will develop increasing professional responsibility for patient care, consultation, research, supervision and teaching activities. They will demonstrate advanced knowledge of ethical, legal, and cultural issues related to all of the above objectives and conduct themselves in accordance with these principles and with current professional standards. Each seminar is led by a triad of facilitators at each level of professional development (Intern, Resident and Career/Staff) to explore ethical and legal conundrums and guiding facility, state and national level laws and rules.

6. Postdoctoral Residency Wellness & Professional Development Retreat (Required)

Facilitated by the Whole Health Psychologist/Whole Health Coach.

The Psychology Postdoctoral Residency Wellness & Professional Development Retreat is a 4-hour experiential workshop typically occurring mid-year. The focus is on assisting trainees in relaxation, improving self-care, and engaging in values reflection. Specific tools/exercises that will be covered include mindfulness, deep relaxation, values-exercise (i.e., PHI, strength-based tools), ACT, challenges of being a Postdoc, etc., and will include opportunities to engage in yoga and tai chi. This is a collaborative retreat, attended by both the specialty neuropsychology and generalist Residents. The content and exercises will be developed in collaboration with the Whole Health facilitator.

7.Postdoctoral Residency Bi-Weekly Peer Consultation (Required):

The TC recognizes that Postdocs often relocate to complete their residency from various localities, both near and far. Many move to the St Petersburg area anticipating a year-long separation from their families and primary support systems. The bonding and friendships that can develop between trainees during these pivotal training years can last a lifetime. In addition to building a strong support system early in the program due to the commonalities in circumstances, adjacent office space that fosters daily interactions and participating in structured learning activities together, the TC protects additional time for Residents to gather informally on a bi-weekly basis for Peer Consultation. There are many benefits to holding a bi-weekly Peer Consultation group. In addition to fostering the development of a trainee support system by creating the space and honoring the time together, Peer Consultation can also improve communication between Residents and the larger, Training Committee. The bi-weekly opportunity to come together as a group privately, allows each Resident the opportunity to discuss training needs with each other, to

share resources, and support one another. It also facilitates group-based feedback and information for the TC.

FELLOWSHIP RESEARCH PROJECT (Required):

At the beginning of the year, Fellows will participate in a Research Kick Off meeting where they will have the opportunity to learn about the current research projects, meet the pool of available Research Supervisors and share information about their research interests and experience. Once matched, the Fellow will immediately meet with his/her Research Supervisor to develop a research plan including timeline with clearly identified, measurable objectives/goals and to set up regularly scheduled research supervision. Research training goals are individually tailored, based on a Fellow's level of interest, academic training, and professional goals. Fellows will be allotted up to 8 hours of protected time per week to work on their selected projects. They will have access to research resources (ex. PSPP and SPSS software, reference books on conducting analysis in Excel and SAS, contact information for R&D IRB Coordinator).

Fellows are required to select one (1) of the following three (2) options:

- Collaboration with Psychology staff member on a local or national human subjects research project.
- Local program evaluation/QS/Performance Improvement study under the direction of a Staff Psychologist.

At the end of the year, Fellows will present/disseminate their research project results in the form of a presentation in the aforementioned Mental Health Grand Rounds as well as possible presentation, poster, symposium, or manuscript/article at a local, state, or national venue.

RESEARCH TRAINING

It has been our experience that Residents value and benefit from a scientist practitioner-based training program which encourages skillful use of the empirical literature and opportunities for collaborative or self-directed research. The research requirement for the General Postdoctoral Resident allows for 20% (equivalent to 8 hours per week) of protected time. To meet the research requirement, Residents will have the opportunity to collaborate with staff and trainees from other disciplines on a program improvement/quality systems project, assist in ongoing research, and/or design and implement an independent research project under the mentoring of one staff member.

Research Supervision/Mentorship/Meetings

The Resident will meet with the Psychology Supervisors at the beginning of the Residency for selection/assignment of primary Research Supervisor. The Resident and the Primary Research Supervisor will work together to develop a research question within the previously listed research options. The Resident and the research Supervisor will develop a bi-weekly supervision schedule dedicated to the Resident's research project. The Resident will also have the opportunity to attend monthly MH&BSS Research Committee Meetings and develop additional Mentorship relationships with other MH Staff scientists. At a minimum, the Resident will be required to attend this meeting in order to present their project and obtain the Service Level approval (by submission and discussion of a detailed abstract) prior to submission of protocol to IRB and implementation of the research project.

TRAINING IN CLINICAL SUPERVISION

In order to promote a Fellow's development of emerging skills in Clinical Supervision, including knowledge of and sensitivity to ethical, legal, and multicultural issues in providing supervision, didactic and experiential training in clinical supervision will be integrated over the course of the training year.

Supervision Institute (Required): At the beginning of the year, Fellows will participate in a day-long workshop involving a half day of didactic lectures by TC Staff on:

- The role of a supervisor & characteristics that make a good supervisor
- Laws, VA and APA Rules and Liability, Tiered Vertical Supervision and Supervision Contracts
- Provision of critical and positive feedback
- Boundaries – the ethics of supervisory relationships and Dealing with Conflict within supervisory relationship (remediation and grievances)

Didactics are followed by an afternoon of simulated and experiential Role Play Exercises with TC staff and Postdoctoral Fellows

Supervision of Supervision (Required): Fellows are expected to attend bi-weekly Supervision of Supervision meetings; these meetings are for staff psychologists who are members of the Training Committee as well as current postdoctoral fellows. At these meetings, topics related to supervision are covered, videos and articles are discussed, and difficult or challenging supervision cases are reviewed with other fellow psychologists to aid in the provision of high-quality supervision to our trainees as well as to provide feedback and consultation to staff psychologists and postdoctoral fellows.

OPTIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Professional Presentations and Teaching (Optional):

For Fellows who identify an interest in provision of professional presentations or teaching beyond the required Mental Health Grand Rounds presentation mentioned above, there are ample opportunities throughout the medical system to participate in additional, adjunctive teaching activities. These can be built into the Fellows individual training goals at the beginning of the year. Examples include:

- Didactic presentation to pre-doctoral interns on general topics related to psychological assessment, diagnoses & treatment/recommendations
- Additional educational presentation to various medical and allied health disciplines on general topics related to psychological assessment, diagnoses & treatment/recommendations (e.g., Mental Health Grand Rounds, Neurology Seminar; Medical Grand Rounds, Social Work Service, Dietary Services, PM&R...)
- Opportunities to provide workshops or seminars to the local chapter of the Florida Psychological Association, or at various VA or State Association sponsored Conferences.

VA Regional Training in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) for PTSD (Optional):

Although all Fellows will have ample opportunity to learn and provide CPT to Veterans within the context of their Primary Clinical Rotation, Fellows electing to complete two (2) PTSD focused rotations may have the additional opportunity of participating in the VA Regional Training in CPT. This is an AS AVAILABLE elective training experience involving a three-day Basic and Group CPT

Workshop held on campus in the Fall, followed by six months of weekly Post-Training Consultation calls.

The target audience for this regional training program includes students and non-permanent hires (e.g., psychology Fellows, postdoctoral fellows), as well as new staff. Once licensed, the attendee who successfully completes this workshop and post training consultation would be eligible for certification as a CPT Provider. Attendance on consultation calls typically begin within two weeks following the workshop training. During the consultation calls the Fellow is expected to actively discuss their current CPT cases. CPT cases are typically seen within the PTSD programs and are supervised by their Primary (PTSD) Rotation Supervisor, a Licensed Psychologist who serves on the Training Committee or Licensed Clinical Social Worker assigned to the PTSD Programs. For this elective, the Fellow is expected to attend a minimum of 80% of the consultation calls (i.e., 20 calls) and complete a minimum of two (2) CPT cases or one (1) group to fulfill this training requirement. The identified facility consultant has the authority to require participation in more than 6 months of post training consultation, depending on individual training needs. Participation in this elective requires approval of the Fellow's Primary Rotation Supervisors and the Training Committee.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAM COMPLETION

Hours: The Fellowship requires completion of 2080 hours to be completed in no more than 24 months. This includes paid federal holidays and accumulated paid annual and sick leave that can be taken during the year.

Minimal Level of Achievement (MLAs) of Profession Wide Competencies:

MLA Mid-Year Requirement (End of Rotation 1 – Profession Wide Competencies Evaluation): Fellows are required to meet 100% of the Competency benchmarks for the Mid-Year Level (i.e., 100% of benchmarks should be rated as 4 or higher). None of the benchmarks should be rated as 1, 2, or 3. Fellows will receive feedback at the midpoint of the first rotation; any observed ongoing deficiencies at this time will result in establishing a signed remediation plan. If the remediation plan is not successfully met within the stipulated timeframe, stated as no later than the End of Rotation 1, Fellows risk non-continuation (fail) of the Fellowship program.

MLA End of Year Requirement (End of Rotation 2 – Profession Wide Competencies Evaluation) Fellows are required to meet 100% of the Competency benchmarks at the End-of-Year Level (i.e., 100% of the benchmarks should be rated as 4 or higher at the end of Rotation 2 to be eligible for successful completion of the Fellowship program). None of the benchmarks can be rated as 1, 2 or 3. Fellows will receive feedback at the midpoint of the second rotation; any observed ongoing deficiencies at this time will result in establishing a signed remediation plan. If the remediation plan is not successfully met within the stipulated timeframe, stated as no later than the End of Rotation 1, Fellows risk non-continuation (fail) of the Fellowship program.

Research Project: Fellows are required to present their research project at Mental Health Grand Rounds, usually scheduled toward the end of the training year (in June or July). Additionally, they may present/disseminate their completed research project as a poster, presentation, symposium, or article/manuscript within one of the following venues: The annual Bay Pines Research & Development Service Research Fair, a State or National level convention, PI Committee, peer reviewed Journal, or as a Book Chapter. Fellows are regularly evaluated by their Research

Supervisor on the attainment of research competencies/skills and meeting of specified goals and timelines within the relevant section of the mid and end of rotation Foundational Competencies Evaluation Form.

PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING COMMITTEE STAFF

MIRELA ADINA ALDEA, PhD

University of Florida, 2007

Licensed Psychologist – Florida

Mental Health Clinic – OCD and Anxiety Disorders Treatment Clinic

Dr. Aldea is a staff Psychologist in the Mental Health Clinic. Dr. Aldea specializes in the treatment of mild and severe obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorders and anxiety disorders using various cognitive-behavioral therapy strategies (e.g., exposure and response prevention, habit reversal training). She also has considerable experience as a generalist providing evidence-based treatments for other disorders and concerns. Dr. Aldea earned her doctoral degree from the University of Florida. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Florida focusing on the treatment and clinical research of obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorders (e.g., OCD, body dysmorphic disorder, hypochondriasis, trichotillomania, skin picking, tics,) and anxiety disorders (e.g., phobias, panic disorder, social anxiety). She then joined the Faculty of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of South Florida where she centered on the clinical treatment and research on obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorders and on providing supervision to doctoral students and psychiatry residents and fellows. Prior to joining the Mental Health Clinic at Bay Pines, Dr. Aldea had been in private practice and also worked as a consultant Psychologist with the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System, providing evaluations and treatment for veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder in the Stress Treatment Program and psychological evaluations for patients who were candidates for organ transplant

JOHN BERG, PhD, ABPP

Emory University, 2011

Licensed Psychologist - Florida

PTSD Programs, Center for Sexual Trauma Services

Dr. Berg completed his Internship at Bay Pines VAHCS in 2011, followed by a postdoctoral fellowship at Emory University / Grady Hospital focusing on suicide prevention and community mental health. In 2014, he returned to Bay Pines VAHCS to work at the Center for Sexual Trauma Services. Dr. Berg's interest in post-trauma recovery stems from his practicum placement during his graduate training at the Atlanta VAMC. There he received extensive training and supervision on delivery of Prolonged Exposure as part of the early VA PE roll out. Originally educated as a mechanical engineer, Dr. Berg has been involved in a number of efforts to use technological innovations to solve health care problems. In 2014, he completed his AMAI 10x10 Informatics Certificate Program. Dr. Berg's research efforts currently center around novel and technological methods of assessment and intervention. Dr. Berg is board certified in clinical psychology.

DAYANA CALVO, PHD

Kent State University, 2017

Neuropsychology Internship & Residency, Tampa VAMC (2016-2019)

Licensed Psychologist - Florida

Neuropsychology Clinic

Dr. Calvo's area of specialization is Clinical Neuropsychology. She completed her doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology from Kent State University in 2017 with a specialization in Neuropsychology. Following her graduate training, she went on to complete an Internship in Neuropsychology at the Tampa VA, where she stayed on board for two years of specialized Postdoctoral Residency Training in Clinical Neuropsychology. She received advanced academic training providing neurocognitive assessments to patients with a wide variety of neurological and psychological diagnoses. Her primary clinical interests include dementia, medical neuropsychology, and advanced geriatric issues. Her primary research interests revolve around health factors (i.e., diet, exercise) associated with cognition. Dr. Calvo serves as the State Representative (FL) for the Early Career Neuropsychologist Committee, APA Division 40. She is a member of the BPVAHCS Multicultural Diversity Subcommittee and provides clinical services to our Spanish-speaking veterans. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** As a Cuban American, bilingual woman, Dr. Calvo is committed to increasing cultural awareness and knowledge in the workplace. She takes note of any diversity factors that may impact patient care and her approach to each evaluation, including selection of neuropsychological instruments, and patient factors such testing behaviors and reception to feedback. She also focuses on being open regarding her own knowledge gaps when working with diverse patients and takes an open communication approach to foster rapport and allow for her patients to feel understood.

GREGORY CAPRIOTTI, PSYD, ABPP

Wright State University-2011

Licensed Psychologist-Florida

Whole Health

Dr. Capriotti is a Board-Certified Psychologist in the Whole Health Program. His primary duties include development and implementation of a wide range of wellness programming and services targeted toward health-related behavior change. This includes programming for improved sleep, increased physical activity, improving food choices, and mindfulness-based stress reduction strategies, in collaboration with several other disciplines. He completed his graduate training at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. Both his Health Service Internship and Post-Doctoral Fellowship were completed at Bay Pines VA Healthcare System. His primary clinical interest includes interface between social psychology and evolutionary psychology as it relates to health-related behaviors. Additional interests include psychological testing, personality psychopathology, positive psychology, health policy, and cultural factors that influence health behaviors. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** I make every effort to emphasize diversity discussions in supervision, at the level of case diagnosis/conceptualization and regarding my relationship with supervisees. I have developed a method of case conceptualization throughout my career that strongly focuses on diversity variables that may impact diagnosis and intervention, and I challenge supervisees to improve their ability to integrate diversity variables into their own conceptualization strategy. Additionally, I attempt to promote an environment/supervisory relationship characterized by psychological safety and mutual learning. This allows open dialogue regarding how I may see cases differently from supervisees due to our own cultural backgrounds.

DAWN L. EDWARDS, PHD

University of Iowa, 1998

Licensed Psychologist - Illinois

Health Promotion Disease Prevention (HPDP)

Health Behavior Coordinator

Dr. Edwards works in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention within the Whole Health Program. Her role includes providing clinical services in areas related to health behavior change and improving quality of life, as well as providing staff training in Patient Centered Care and Motivational Interviewing. She is also a National Training Consultant for the VA Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) evidence-based treatment initiative. Dr. Edwards earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology with a Health Psychology track emphasis. After completing a VA internship with a focus on primary care mental health integration, she accepted a position at a regional medical center in Northern Illinois as their first Behavioral Health Integration Coordinator, integrating behavioral health into primary and specialty care clinics at the facility. Dr. Edwards returned to the VA system in 2006. Since then, she has worked at several VA facilities in roles related to integrating behavioral health and medicine. She joined the Bay Pines staff in 2018. Her primary clinical interest is in using brief interventions to assist Veterans with making health behavior changes, and effectively managing chronic medical conditions. Dr Edwards' other interests include program development and staff training. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** I address diversity in the context of supervision by not only discussing with the supervisee the impact of diversity factors on the assessment and treatment of the individual patients we treat, but also from the perspective of us as clinicians and colleagues more broadly. I model increased awareness of how one's own background can affect our work with others by sharing with supervisees the details of my own unusual upbringing regarding environment, and the ways I feel this may impact my perspectives and interactions with patients and others. I invite trainees to similarly share and explore with me how their own background and upbringing might affect their interactions with, or perspective of, individuals who are different from them in a significant way.

RAFAEL S. HARRIS, Jr., PSYD

Florida Institute of Technology, 1999

Licensed Psychologist - North Carolina and Florida

Clinical Psychologist

Substance Abuse Treatment Program

Rafael joined the Bay Pines VHA in August 2008. His assignment is within outpatient component of the Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SATP). Previously, Rafael had worked at three different university counseling centers. His approach to therapy (and conceptually supervision) is characterized by an egalitarian perspective that aims for veterans to consider whether their relationship with substances is consistent or inconsistent with their personal goals, emphasizing personal choice. He enjoys the professional struggle between the quest for evidence-based therapies versus the idiographic nature of each individual. He tends to conceptualize mental health consumers from an existential/humanistic framework, while attending to the consumer's theory of change. Rafael is wary of the medicalization of psychology, along with being fascinated by how multiculturalism gets justified as a so-called social justice paradigm when in his opinion it's just another example of hierarchy at work via the search for power. He is originally from Venezuela, South America.

STEPHANIE HODGES, PSYD

Nova Southeastern University, 2009

Neuropsychology Residency Scott & White Memorial Hospital, 2009-2010

Neuropsychology Residency North Texas VA Health Care System 2010-2011

Licensed Psychologist - Florida

Neuropsychology Clinic

Dr. Hodges' area of specialization is Clinical Neuropsychology. She completed her doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology from Nova Southeastern University in 2009 with a specialization in neuropsychology. Following her graduate training, she went on to complete an Internship in Neuropsychology at the North Texas VA Health Care System, followed by two years of specialized Postdoctoral Residency Training in Clinical Neuropsychology. She received advanced academic training providing neurocognitive assessments to patients with a wide variety of neurological and psychological diagnoses. She has performed intraoperative WADA assessments and pre- and post-surgical evaluations for patients with chronic pain, intractable epilepsy, tumor resection and movement disorders. She is a member of the Bay Pines VAHCS Education and Research committee. Her primary research interests include cognitive assessment of concussion and movement disorders. She also provides weekly didactics to multidisciplinary staff and trainees on a variety of topics involving neuropathology and neuroanatomy targeting specific regions and circuitry. Currently, she serves as a primary supervisor for Interns and fellows within the Neuropsychology Consult Service. Clinical population includes Veterans with a history of known or suspected TBI, neurodegenerative disorder, NPH, CVA, MS, epilepsy, neoplasm, metabolic disorder, LD and/or ADHD. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** As a lifelong Floridian, Dr. Hodges is committed to increasing cultural awareness and knowledge through communication, supervision, and training exercises. Supervision focuses on aspects of cultural diversity through the use of authentic discussions. Supervision aims to facilitate discussions on diversity issues to increase multicultural awareness within the treatment setting but also within the supervisory relationship.

KELLIE HYDE, PSYD

Nova Southeastern University, 2009

Licensed Psychologist - Florida

Clinical Psychologist

PC-MHI

Dr. Hyde is a licensed Psychologist in Florida. She earned her Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from Nova Southeastern University in 2009. She completed her Health Service Internship and post-doctoral training with the United States Air Force. She served on active duty as a Captain in the Air Force for four years. During her Active-Duty tour, Dr. Hyde served as a Mental Health Program Manager. She distinguished herself as a Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape psychological expert by co-establishing the first Rescue Group resiliency program in the USA and overseas. While on Active Duty, Dr. Hyde was nominated for the USAF Medical Services Biomedical Clinician of the Year Award and was also selected as the squadron's Company Grade Officer of the Year. After completing her tour in the Air Force, she worked as a general Psychologist in Outpatient Mental Health at the Orlando VA for two and a half years. In 2015, she transferred to the Bay Pines VA where she worked in the PTSD IRP for four and a half years. She is certified in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) and Prolonged Exposure (PE) therapy. Dr. Hyde is currently working in

PC-MHI since October of 2019 when she transitioned from the PTSD IRP. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** A significant part of my supervision experience is creating a safe space in which Supervisees feel comfortable discussing a multitude of topics, including diversity. I found this to be very helpful in my own experience as a supervisee while serving on Active Duty as a female officer. I believe that our individual backgrounds play a significant role in our relationships, which is why I think diversity is always critical to consider in supervision.

DENISE MAKOWSKI, PSYD
Florida Institute of Technology, 1996
Licensed Psychologist- Florida
PTSD-Integrated Recovery Program
Mental Health Clinic
Practicum Training Director

Dr. Makowski received her PsyD. in clinical psychology from the Florida Institute of Technology. She completed her Internship and postdoctoral residency at the University of South Florida, where she also served as a clinical faculty member in the College of Medicine-Neurology/Immunology Clinic. Dr. Makowski has specialty track training in Family Systems Theory and couples therapy. Her career experiences include private practice, teaching, and serving as both staff and a specialty team Psychologist for Bayfront Medical Center and Advocate Healthcare Systems- a large conglomerate of hospitals in the Chicago metro area. She joined the staff at Bay Pines VA in 2013, as a fee basis Psychologist working in the PTSD programs. Dr. Makowski currently works in the PTSD-IRP and MHC. She serves as the Director of the Practicum Training program and is involved in supervising Practicum students, Interns, and Postdoctoral Fellows. Her clinical and research interests include trauma, family systems, parenting issues, brief psychotherapy, anxiety/depressive disorders, psychological assessment, and women's issues. Dr. Makowski enjoys activities related to the German culture in which she was raised and overall European influence. She is fluent in the German language. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** Dr. Makowski is committed to incorporating all forms of diversity into both clinical and supervisory experiences as an effort to enrich learning and professional growth.

ARIAN MARQUEZ, PSYD
Florida School of Professional Psychology, 2011
Licensed Psychologist-Florida
Clinical Psychologist
Local Recovery Coordinator
Co-Chair, Multicultural Diversity Sub Committee

Dr. Marquez is a staff Psychologist and the Local Recovery Coordinator. He received his Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from the Florida School of Professional Psychology in 2011 and completed his clinical Internship at Yale School of Medicine. Much of Dr. Marquez's post graduate work at Yale and USF Health focused on addressing behavioral health concerns within a primary care setting. During his time at USF, Dr. Marquez also served as a supervisor and assisted in the development of their postdoctoral training program. He joined the Bay Pines VAHCS in 2013 and has worked in Primary Care, PTSD and PRRC/Inpatient services. Dr. Marquez has expertise in working with

severe and chronic mental illness and now works to increase recovery-based efforts facility wide. He is competent to provide services in multiple evidence-based treatment modalities, to include dialectical behavioral, cognitive processing, prolonged exposure, and interpersonal/relational psychodynamic therapies. Dr. Marquez is particularly interested in diversity issues and the impact individual differences may have on presenting problems. In addition to participating in the training and supervision of Interns and peers, Dr. Marquez now serves as the chair for the Multicultural Committee. His areas of research focus on health care disparities within LGBT and Latino populations, moral injury, as well as psychosocial rehabilitation. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** Given the area that we reside and work in, it is hard not to include diversity into our everyday dialogue. The greater Tampa Bay area is a melting pot for individuals, much like myself, from around the world and from diverse backgrounds. In addition, our veterans come from areas across the nation and present with a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, disability statuses, religious affiliations and sexual/gender identities and we would be hard pressed not to have to consider these when exploring case conceptualizations and treatment planning. Further, the confluence of the veterans' background and our trainees own is an area that is often discussed as it may present its own challenges and obstacles to care. As such, Education and introspection are highly focused and stressed upon while in supervision with me.

LEONA (BROOKE) McCURRY, PSYD
Georgia School of Professional Psychology, 2016
Licensed Psychologist-Florida
Clinical Psychologist
PTSD-IRP/IOP

Dr. McCurry is a staff Psychologist in the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder-Integrated Recovery Program (PTSD-IRP). She specializes in the assessment and treatment of PTSD and works primarily with the outpatient and intensive outpatient programs. Dr. McCurry completed her postdoctoral fellowship at the Bay Pines VA on the PTSD/Women's clinic track and was hired as a permanent staff member following this fellowship. Dr. McCurry has received extensive training in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Prolonged Exposure (PE), and in the assessment of PTSD. She is a primary supervisor for PTSD IRP. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** Dr. McCurry was raised in a bicultural missionary family and spent her childhood in the South Pacific before moving back to the U.S. Although this is only one piece of her story, it shaped her worldview from a young age to honor, respect and appreciate other's differences and points of view. She strives for inclusivity and encourages trainees to consider their own experiences and characteristics that play a role in the dynamic therapeutic relationship. Learning from others aids in personal growth and she recognizes that there is always room for growth. Some characteristics may be more salient than others to the Veterans we serve, and it is our duty to honor and attend to what is most important when we meet with them. In supervision, it is especially important to allow an open, safe discussion regarding our own unique differences and ways they may impact us

KATHRYN A. MICHAEL, PHD
Central Michigan University, 2018
Licensed Psychologist - Florida

Primary Care – Mental Health Integration (Women’s Clinic)

Dr. Michael completed both her predoctoral Internship and postdoctoral fellowship at Bay Pines VAHCS. After completing her fellowship on the PTSD/Women’s Clinic track, Dr. Michael was hired as a full-time staff member. Dr. Michael works as a member of the Women’s Clinic primary care team to provide services to female veterans coping with a variety of medical and mental health concerns such as problematic substance use, PTSD, cancer, depression, relationship issues, anxiety, tinnitus, chronic pain, diabetes, adjustment issues, and hypertension. Dr. Michael also partners with the Audiology Clinic to provide psychoeducation to veterans about the role of stress management in coping with tinnitus. As an early career Psychologist, Dr. Michael values any opportunity to learn and grow professionally. Dr. Michael’s open and inquisitive attitude towards others has been shaped by her experiences growing up as a biracial child in Antigua with both Caribbean and American influences. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** Dr. Michael believes that it is important to acknowledge and respect the dynamic interactions between individual differences, multilayered identities, and contexts in building collaborative relationships with clients and supervisees.

STACEY NEMETH ROBERTS, PHD

Florida State University, 2018

Licensed Psychologist - Florida

Acute Inpatient Recovery Unit

Dr. Nemeth Roberts completed her Health Service internship at the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Affairs Health System, and her postdoctoral fellowship in substance abuse disorders and behavioral health integration at the Bay Pines VACHS. Dr. Nemeth Roberts then took a staff psychologist position in Primary Care-Mental Health Integration. Dr. Nemeth Roberts currently serves as the psychologist on the locked inpatient mental health unit. She works as part of an interdisciplinary team providing crisis stabilization, psychotherapy, and assessment for veterans presenting with acute and complex psychiatric disorders. Dr. Nemeth Roberts also holds a BFA and MFA in fine art, and works to integrate creative expression in the recovery process. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** I am interested in how health care disparities inform the diagnostic process, as well as inhibit service delivery. In my own practice, it has been important for me to actively work towards developing an anti-racist stance. I seek to create a supervisory space in which trainees feel comfortable developing their professional identity and examine how their identit(ies) inform their voice as a psychotherapist.

ROMA PALCAN, PHD

State University of NY at Buffalo, 1995

Licensed Psychologist - Florida

Counseling Psychologist

Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (DR RTP)

Roma Palcan is a licensed Psychologist who currently serves in the Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program, providing support for Veterans who seek independent housing and employment. Prior to this VA assignment, she was Health Behavior Coordinator, and Primary Care Psychologist at Bay Pines VA Health Care System. She also serves as the Learning Circle Leader Expert of VA Voices. Dr. Palcan received her doctorate in Counseling Psychology from the State University of NY at Buffalo in 1995. Prior to her appointment at BPVAHCS, Dr. Palcan spent 13 years in private practice during which time she owned, operated, and managed the multi-

disciplinary practice, Life and Health Psychology Associates Inc. One of her most rewarding professional endeavors was co-hosting a live talk radio program as the Psychologist expert in men's mental health issues. Outside of her profession, Roma Palcan lives a quiet and peaceful life in beautiful St. Petersburg with her children.

DANIEL PHILIP, PHD

University of Florida, 2003

Licensed Psychologist - Florida

Clinical Psychologist

Substance Abuse Treatment Program

General Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Director

Dr. Philip joined the Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SATP) at the Bay Pines VAMC in March 2012, after spending nearly 2 years as a Psychologist in Primary Care Behavioral Health at the VA Outpatient Clinic in Jacksonville, FL. Prior to joining the VA, Dr. Philip worked in two counseling centers (where he held appointments as Assistant Director and Director of Training), taught undergraduate, masters, and doctoral students at three different universities, and had a small private practice. During his predoctoral Internship, he participated in a year-long specialization in substance abuse counseling and continued this focus upon graduating. Dr. Philip's takes an integrated approach to therapy, balancing evidence-based therapies with individual client needs. He believes strongly in the importance of the therapeutic alliance for effective counseling and uses a wide range of interventions to help clients with their use and abuse of substances as well as overall mental health issues. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** The idea that our views on life are influenced, at least in part if not substantially, by our past experiences is immutable. Similarly, in my mind, our past experiences are often heavily shaped by personal characteristics of both ourselves and the others around us; hence, diversity characteristics play a significant role in our lives and in therapy. In supervision, I believe it is critical to identify not only how issues of diversity play a role for our clients but also how they influence our own worldview. I look to engage supervisees in discussions of our own diversity as a means to help facilitate their self-knowledge and understanding of how a patients' diversity impacts them.

JEFFERY PRATT, PSYD

Florida Institute of Technology, 2015

Licensed Psychologist-Kentucky

Clinical Psychologist

PTSD-Integrated Recovery Program

Dr. Pratt is a staff Psychologist in the PTSD-IRP. He received his Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from the Florida Institute of Technology in 2015 and completed his clinical Internship at the Lexington VA Medical Center in Lexington, KY. After his Internship, he was hired as a staff Psychologist at the Lexington VA, working in the PTSD Clinical Team. In 2018, he joined the Bay Pines VAHSC as part of the PTSD-IRP team, working primarily in the residential program. His clinical work and interests include group and individual therapy to a complex population of Veterans with PTSD and substance use disorders, involving evidence-based treatment modalities, including Cognitive Processing Therapy and Prolonged Exposure. He also utilizes Virtual Reality equipment to assist in Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the**

supervisory relationship: Dr. Pratt utilizes personal and clinical experiences with diverse populations to shape the way he conceptualizes and works with clients as well as supervisees. He encourages supervisees to utilize their own diverse experiences to guide their learning and enhance the supervisory relationship

JENNIFER PRESNALL-SHVORIN, PHD

University of Kentucky-2015

Licensed Psychologist-Florida, New York

Primary Care - Mental Health Integration

Dr. Presnall-Shvorin is a Psychologist in Primary Care - Mental Health Integration (PCMHI). Her role as a Co-Located Collaborative Care provider includes functional assessment in the primary care setting, brief intervention, and providing interdisciplinary support and consultation. She is a co-facilitator of the Race-Based Stress and Empowerment group and is a national consultant for Prolonged Exposure for Primary Care (PE-PC). She is a member of the Disruptive Behavior Committee and is the chair of the Psychology Training Committee's Multicultural Diversity Subcommittee. She also serves as chair-elect for the Association of VA Psychologist Leaders' Early Career Psychologist Special Interest Group. She completed her graduate training at the University of Kentucky, with a research focus on assessment of personality disorder from the Five-Factor Model perspective. She completed her internship at VA Connecticut Healthcare System – West Haven Campus with an emphasis on PTSD. She completed postdoctoral training at the War-Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC) in NJ.

Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship: I attempt to demonstrate cultural humility in ongoing discussions of diversity within supervision. Whenever possible, I try to incorporate aspects of individual and cultural identity within assessment and treatment planning and make efforts to explicitly address individual differences within the context of PCMHI. I try to recognize my own areas of privilege (e.g., race and ethnicity) while working toward empowerment in areas of less privilege (e.g., gender and sexual orientation). I invite supervisees to bring discussion of their own experiences related to diversity, power, and privilege into the supervisory relationship.

ZOE PROCTOR-WEBER, PSYD, PHD, ABPP-CN

Nova Southeastern University, 2005

Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Residency Tampa VAMC 2005-2007

Licensed Psychologist - Florida

Director of Health Service Psychology Internship Training

Director of Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Residency Training

Neuropsychology Clinic and PM&R CIIRP/PM&R Polytrauma TBI Program

Dr. Proctor-Weber is a Board-Certified Clinical Neuropsychologist. She completed her 2-year Division 40 neuropsychology fellowship at the Tampa VAMC in acute poly-trauma TBI, epilepsy and memory disorders. She has worked at USF within the Psychiatry Department assessing memory disorders and at Tampa General Hospital within the neurology and rehabilitation departments providing intraoperative Wada assessment and comprehensive pre- and post-surgical NP evaluations for patients with intractable epilepsy. Primary research interests involve Cognitive Assessment, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Intra-individual Variation within neurologically compromised individuals. She is PI on multiple active research projects, including a large Neuropsychology Research Database. She is the Alternate Chair of the Bay Pines IRB and serves as Treasurer/Secretary of the National VA Psychology Training Council (VAPTC). She teaches weekly didactics focused on neuropathology, neuroanatomy, and neuropsychological assessment. She serves as research mentor and primary supervisor for clinical training rotations

within PM&R CIIRP and PM&R Polytrauma TBI and the general Neuropsychology Clinic. Clinical population includes Veterans with a history of known or suspected TBI, neurodegenerative disorder, NPH, CVA, MS, epilepsy, neoplasm, endocrine and metabolic disorders, and/or movement disorders. She is a Past President of the Florida Psychological Association and serves as the editor for the American Psychological Association's Division 31 Newsletter. Dr. Proctor-Weber is also the Director of Training for the Health Service Psychology Internship and Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Residency programs at Bay Pines VAHCS. She is a member of AACN, FPA and APA Division 40, 18 and 31. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** In supervision, I join our trainees in cultivating an advanced appreciation for how culture and diversity affect the evaluation process. Selection of appropriate measurements and normative comparison groups take into consideration external factors, such as language proficiency, access to education and level of acculturation. Additionally, we attend to our own beliefs, worldview and innate biases that moderate the way in which we interpret behaviors, Awareness of, and sensitivity to the unique aspects of identity and self are critical in conducting a culturally informed examination.

CARESSA SLOCUM, PHD

Central Michigan University, 2019

Licensed Clinical Psychologist – Florida

St. Petersburg VA Outpatient Clinic

Dr. Slocum completed both her predoctoral Internship and postdoctoral fellowship at Bay Pines VAHCS. After completing her fellowship on the PTSD/Women's Clinic track, Dr. Slocum was hired as a full-time staff member. Currently, Dr. Slocum works as the general mental health psychologist at the St. Petersburg VA Outpatient Clinic located in downtown St. Petersburg, approximately 20 minutes from the Bay Pines VA main campus. Dr. Slocum has specialized training in the assessment and treatment of anxiety and trauma-related disorders and depression, including the use of CPT, PE, and CBT-D. Within her current position Dr. Slocum collaborates with a small interdisciplinary mental health team consisting of psychology, psychiatry, nursing, and social work/PCMHI to provide care for patients presenting with the full range of mental health concerns. Dr. Slocum strives to foster a space that promotes open and honest communication and mutual learning, both in work with patients and during clinical supervision. She believes that each person brings vital knowledge and expertise, especially about their own lived experience. Dr. Slocum actively seeks to identify and incorporate diversity-related issues into her case conceptualizations and patient care and encourages critical thinking and discussion with trainees about these topics.

ERIC L SULLIVAN, PhD

Suffolk University, 2010

Licensed Psychologist - Ohio

Clinical Psychologist

Home Based Primary Care (HBPC)

Dr. Sullivan serves the Home-Based Primary Care programs at the Bradenton and Sarasota Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). He specializes in assessment of cognitive problems common among a geriatric population, and provision of geropsychological interventions including psychotherapy for depression, anxiety, and adjustment issues, and caregiver support. He performs all services either virtually or in the Veterans' homes. He previously worked at the Columbus VA

Ambulatory Care Center in Ohio for 8 years on a Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (BHIP) team providing assessment and psychotherapy to a general mental health clinic outpatient population. He received extensive training and consultation in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Problem Solving Therapy (PST), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) for couples, Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS), and the Unified Protocol (UP). He is a lifelong learner who is currently pursuing board certification as a geropsychologist. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** Appreciation of diversity and awareness of the influence of our personal experiences and worldview is crucial to providing effective assessment and intervention to Veterans. Careful and sensitive, but also direct and genuine discussion with supervisors and colleagues about diversity issues is important to growth as a trainee and continuous improvement as a licensed professional. As a supervisor I will ask trainees to examine their own experience and worldview, to explore its potential impact on clients, to explore the impact of clients on the trainee, and to use insights from these discussions to grow in the ability to provide effective services to clients that meets them where they are, and honors their values and experiences.

CHANNING SOFKO, PhD

University of South Alabama, 2017

Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Fellowship, Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, 2017-2019

Licensed Psychologist – Rhode Island

Geropsychology Clinic

Dr. Sofko received her doctoral degree from the University of South Alabama's Combined-Integrated Clinical and Counseling Psychology doctoral program. She completed her Health Service internship training at the Vanderbilt-Veteran's Affairs Internship Consortium. Dr. Sofko also completed a two-year post-doctoral fellowship in the Clinical Neuropsychology Specialty Program (CNSP) at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University where she conducted inpatient and outpatient neuropsychological evaluations with a wide variety of neurologic (e.g., dementias, CVAs, TBI, HIV, NPH, MS, epilepsy, endocrine, and genetic) and psychiatric diagnoses. She also took part in an interdisciplinary pre-surgical DBS 'fast-track' clinic for individuals with Parkinson's disease, and she engaged in regular interdisciplinary consultation meetings with memory-disorders Neurologists. During her post-doctoral fellowship, she developed and ran a caregiver education group. At the Bay Pines VA, she works in the Geropsychology Clinic where she conducts individual psychotherapy, brief cognitive screenings, and more extensive neuropsychological evaluations for older adults. She is also involved with the Neuropsychology service. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** It is important to intentionally address issues of diversity in supervision. Specifically, it is necessary to assess how our own worldviews impact the way we interpret data, and we must also address the limitations of our normative comparisons. In the field of Geropsychology, topics of ageism, our own views and beliefs about aging, and differences in access to education can be helpful discussions within the supervisory relationship. In psychotherapy, it is important to be mindful of how diversity characteristics may play a role in navigating the aging process. At a larger level as psychologists, it is important to be aware of power and privilege and how this can impact the therapeutic relationship.

JADA J. STEWART-WILLIS, PHD

Nova Southeastern University, 2015

Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Residency, Bay Pines VA Health Care System, 2015-2017

Licensed Psychologist - Florida

Neuropsychology Clinic

Dr. Stewart-Willis completed her doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology at Nova Southeastern University in June of 2015. Following her graduate training, she successfully completed an Internship in Neuropsychology at the Bay Pines VA Health Care System followed by two years of specialized Postdoctoral Residency Training in Clinical Neuropsychology. Dr. Stewart-Willis received advanced academic training providing neurocognitive assessments and cognitive rehabilitation treatment to patients with a wide variety of neurologic and psychiatric diagnoses. She is licensed in the state of Florida, and her current specialized clinical interests include assessment of movement disorders, CVA & vascular-related cognitive impairment, immune mediated demyelinating diseases, and assessment and rehabilitation of traumatic brain injury. She also serves as consultant liaison to the Bay Pines VAHCS Radiation/Oncology Service. As an attending on the Neuropsychology Outpatient Consult service, she works with a diverse Veteran population, and also provides evaluation services for individuals admitted to inpatient units (e.g., Telemetry, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, and Community Living Center). Dr. Stewart-Willis coordinates the Neuropsychology Research Lab/Collective, and her primary research interests include cognitive aging, vascular correlates of neurocognitive decline, and the clinical utility of cognitive measures used in the assessment of TBI and neurodegenerative disorders. She is an active member of professional affiliations including INS and APA Division 40. **Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship:** Deliberately. In supervision, aspects of diversity often shape our understanding of an experience or issue, as well as provide a context for our interpersonal exchanges. Other times, we encounter aspects of diversity in ways that don't require further examination at all. In either circumstance, I encourage students toward authentic interactions with elements of diversity (their own as well as their patient's). I also attempt to model this by exploring in supervision how my own cultural background (e.g., African American, female, middle-class), informs my understanding and views of a certain topic and/or how I approach training and my clinical work. It is my belief that when we can explore cultural differences and similarities in supervision, we are better prepared to sit with, discuss, and address them when needed as they arise in practice.

R. JOHN SUTHERLAND, PHD, ABPP

University of Houston

Licensed Psychologist - Minnesota

Center for Sexual trauma Services

Dr. Sutherland received his BA with emphasis in history and social studies education from the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN. He earned a Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology from the University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis campus and then received his PhD in Counseling Psychology from the University of Houston (APA accredited), Houston Texas. Dr. Sutherland completed his master's in healthcare administration from the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota. He completed his clinical internship at the National Center of PTSD (APA accredited) which is affiliated with Pacific Islands Health Care System VA, Honolulu, Hawaii. He completed his clinical postdoctoral fellowship in Anxiety and Trauma at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (APA accredited), Houston, Texas. Dr. Sutherland is board certified as a

Licensed Psychologist through the Minnesota Board of Psychology, License Number: MN5295 and is board certified as a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor through the Minnesota Board of Behavioral Health. He is also board certified through the American Board of Professional Psychology in Counseling Psychology and is a National Trainer for Prolonged Exposure for PTSD through the Center for the Treatment and Study of Anxiety, University of Pennsylvania. Prior to Dr. Sutherland's arrival at the C.W. Bill Young VAMC in 2020, he served as the System Director of Addiction Services and as a psychologist at Allina Health in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Dr. Sutherland works in the Center for Sexual Trauma focuses on using EBT for PTSD including cognitive processing therapy and prolonged exposure for PTSD therapy. He has a special interest in serving Veterans with histories of addiction, sexual trauma, and serious persistent mental illness. Dr. Sutherland engages in the LGBT communities and believes that individual differences and culture shapes our understanding of human behaviors, ethics, and values.

ROD VELEZMORO, PHD

University of Central Florida, 2014

Licensed Psychologist – Florida

Clinical Psychologist

Whole Health Services Program Director

Dr. Velezmoro received his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Central Florida in 2014. He completed Internship at Bay Pines VAHCS followed by postdoctoral residency in trauma/primary care also at Bay Pines. He joined staff at Bay Pines in 2015. Dr. Velezmoro currently serves as the Director of Whole Health services for Bay Pines Healthcare System. As such, he is directly involved in the implementation of Complementary Integrative Healthcare (CIH), well-being services for Veterans and staff, and promoting community partnerships. Dr. Velezmoro is involved in promoting research, improving customer service in the VA, and promoting diversity.

ARIELA YASOVA-ZAFFOS, PSYD

Nova Southeastern University, 2017

Licensed Psychologist - Wisconsin

PTSD- Integrated Recovery Program

PTSD/SUD Specialist

Dr. Yasova received her bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Florida in 2011 (Go Gators!) and her doctoral degree from Nova Southeastern University in 2017. She has been a licensed Psychologist in the State of Wisconsin since 2018. She completed her Health Service Internship at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Healthcare Center (a combined VA and DOD facility.) She completed her post-doctoral fellowship specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of substance use disorders. Upon completion of her training, she was employed at Lovell FHCC as a clinical psychologist in their residential PTSD program. At the end of 2019, Dr. Yasova moved back to her hometown of Clearwater, Florida and became a psychologist at the CWY Bill Young VA. She works in the residential PTSD-Integrated Recovery Program and serves as the PTSD/SUD psychologist. She is certified in Cognitive Processing Therapy, and her primary theoretical orientation is cognitive behavioral. Dr. Yasova tends to also conceptualize from an ACT lens.

Please describe how you address diversity in the context of supervision including how your own diversity characteristics play a role in the supervisory relationship: Dr. Yasova was raised in a multicultural home and is bi-lingual (English/Spanish). She reflects on her unique cultural background to identify how it impacts her case conceptualization. She engages clients in

discussions of how their diversity characteristics impact their experiences and works in supervision helping trainees explore this. Dr. Yasova views supervision as a safe time to have difficult conversations about diversity characteristics and how they influence us as providers, impact psychosocial functioning, and affect the therapeutic process.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Internship Year:

The Fellowship is a full-time, one-year appointment to be completed from August 14, 2022 - August 12, 2023. Instances in which the one-year period needs to be extended because of illness or other extenuating circumstances will be addressed individually by the Training Committee and Office of Academic Affiliations. A maximum of 24 months is allowed by APA to complete all Internship training requirements regardless of extenuating circumstances. Any approved extension of the one-year training period would occur without funding.

Stipend:

The current annual stipend for full-time VA Postdocs is \$46,334, paid biweekly throughout the 1-year appointment period. This stipend is subject to Federal Income Tax withholding. Fellows are classified as full-time employees, making them eligible for health insurance and life insurance benefits. Fellows are not eligible for participation in the VA retirement programs. Questions concerning payment of the stipend or related topics about benefits may be directed to the Training Director.

Leave Time:

Fellows will accrue four (4) hours of paid sick leave (LS – Sick) and four (4) hours of paid annual leave (LA - Annual) every two-week pay period. This equates to approximately 13 days of sick leave and 13 days of annual leave over the course of the Fellowship year. In addition, there are 10 Federal Holidays. Fellows are encouraged to use leave time judiciously. You should not plan to request more than seven days in any one rotation. As with doctoral staff, leave requests must be coordinated with patient care needs and the leave requests of other staff. Planned leave must be entered into the VATAS system six weeks prior to taking for approval.

With the approval of the current rotation supervisor and the Training Director, each Fellow may be allocated up to eight (8) days of authorized Administrative Absence (LN - Administrative) for educational purposes (e.g. conferences, institution approved research presentations, VHA interviews, dissertation defense etc...) as per VA Handbook 5011, Part III, Chapter 2, Section 12 which states that employees, including trainees, may be given authorized Administrative Absence without charge to leave when the activity is considered to be of substantial benefit to VA in accomplishing its general mission or one of its specific functions, such as education and training. While LN leave may be approved at the service level, it is up to the discretion of HR and the Director to finalize approval. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to plan for and use your leave appropriately. For example, if you wish to use a significant block of annual leave during the fall-winter holiday season, you should avoid using this type of leave early in the Fellowship. If you want to be able to take leave later in the Fellowship to interview for jobs, then be sure to save some annual leave for this purpose in the event that LN is not available or approved at the facility level.

At the service level, the Training Committee and Training Director have the right to deny requests for LN if it is likely to have a negative effect on the course of training. Authorized Administrative absence for travel time is limited and must be approved separately. Further, Fellows are responsible for all expenses associated with off-station training activities.

All leave requests should be entered electronically in advance and require approval by the Assistant Chief, Mental Health & Behavioral Sciences Service (MH&BSS). In addition, an informational e-mail with dates and times of the leave request, forwarded through your rotation supervisor, should be submitted to the Director of Training. If you are unable to report to work because of illness or emergency, you must CALL the service Secretary before, but no later than one hour prior to your scheduled duty time, as well as notify your Primary Supervisor and the Director of Training. An electronic leave request for unanticipated leave must be completed on the same day as your return.

Holidays:

There are eleven federal holidays during the Internship year. Staff and Interns typically do not work on these dates:

Labor Day	Columbus Day	Veterans Day	Thanksgiving
Christmas	New Year's	Martin Luther King Day	President's Day
Memorial Day		Independence Day	Juneteenth
Independence Day			

Supervised Duty Hours:

Normal duty hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for all Psychology Section staff. Fellows may choose to work at their desks before and/or after duty hours but may not provide clinical services to patients unless an identified supervisor is available on site for consultation. When a supervisor is on leave, another staff member will be assigned to provide consultation and supervision of all clinical duties. All staff are required to wear their photo ID badge while on station. Lunch periods are typically scheduled for thirty minutes between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. On-station meals are available through the on-campus Canteen. Due to scheduling constraints, Fellows and Staff often choose to meet during the lunch period and "carry in" lunches. You are required to notify your supervisor if you anticipate leaving station.

Outside Professional Activities:

Fellows will not be allowed to participate in any other outside professional activities without first receiving permission from the Training Committee. Clinical service to the public for fee will not be allowed. Non-funded supervised clinical service of a training nature will be allowed. Supervised clinical service of a training nature will be considered, as well as funded teaching or research positions on non-duty time. All other activities will be considered on an individual basis. In general, direct clinical service to the public in other than a training relationship will not be allowed.

Administrative Support:

Our service has administrative staff that provide limited assistance to the Psychology Training Programs. General supplies, fax, scanner, and a copy machine are located within the various Mental Health sections for easy access. Please be aware that supplies, mailing materials and copier access are to be used only in direct support of patient care and current training activities. Use of VA letterhead and envelopes for other than official business is strictly prohibited and carries serious consequences. If in doubt, please consult your supervisor or the Director of Training.

Automated Psychological Testing Centers:

On-line administration and scoring of numerous self-report inventories and questionnaires are available to Staff Psychologists and Fellows via the Mental Health package. The Mental Health Package gives Staff Psychologists and Fellows access to a range of individual and group psychological tests, allowing on-site administration to patients in various areas of the facility, including the Mental Health Clinic, Substance Abuse Treatment Programs, DRRTP, PRRC, Stress Treatment Program, Center for Sexual Trauma Services, Neuropsychology Clinic and Primary Care Clinics. In addition, Fellows rotating through any program have access to psychometrist services for the administration and scoring of select personality and cognitive tests. Not only is computerized scoring of more than 40 tests available but this innovative system also allows computer terminals to be used for test administration. Test scores and, for some tests, interpretive data are available immediately.

Library Resources:

There are separate libraries for consumer health/patient education (Patient Education Resource Center) and for clinical professional needs (Medical Library). The Medical Library collection consists of over 400 journal (print) subscriptions and approximately 5,000 books and audiovisual titles. Books and audiovisuals are available for a two-week checkout period with renewal options available. Print journals are for in-house use only but there is also an extensive online journal collection with many of them being full-text available and evidence-based. In addition, there is onsite access to many of the leading medical, nursing, and psychiatric databases. These include (but not limited to) PubMed, MD Consult, First Consult, CINAHL, Psychiatry Online, and UptoDate. PsychInfo, Health Business, and Cochrane.

The Medical Library has established a section containing materials on empirically supported psychological treatments. There are well-equipped computers (with Internet access and Microsoft Office products) available in the Medical Library. Internet use is restricted to educational needs and job-related activities. The Medical Librarian assists with computer-based literature searches and orientation sessions to the physical and online library resources. The Library assists with reference requests, library instruction, and interlibrary loans. The interlibrary loans are limited to non-charging sources from across the United States unless approved by the Chief, Library Service. After-hours access to the Medical Library is restricted to individuals have a Bay Pines identification badge.

Emergency Procedures:

The C.W. Bill Young VAMC - Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (BPVAHCS) has a number of different procedures for emergencies. During orientation and throughout the year, you will receive specific fire and safety training from BPVAHCS professionals. In addition, you will also receive procedural instructions regarding suicide threats, bomb threats, and hurricane precautions. It is essential

that you understand and retain this information for immediate recall if needed. In the event of a hurricane, Psychology staff may be required to return to station to assist with patient care needs.

Accidents:

There are special requirements for reporting accidents that occur on station. You must report any accident or injury that occurs to your immediate Supervisor and Director of Training. Do this even if you do not feel that medical care is necessary. It is necessary to report to Employee Health on the day of the incident. It is also necessary to file an incident report. Your primary Supervisor or TD can assist you in this.

Employee Health:

Information: The Occupational Health Service Unit at the Bay Pines VAHCS provides employees with first-aid treatment for minor illnesses to enable employees to remain at work. Antibiotics will not be prescribed. The Occupational Health Physician/designee will refer the employee to his/her private physician for all additional or definitive care.

Emergency treatment for non-job-related serious illnesses may be given. If necessary, the employee may be hospitalized at Bay Pines until he/she is able to be moved to a private facility. Employees who receive such care and who are not entitled as beneficiaries of the VA or OWCP (worker's comp) will be charged for such services.

Procedure: As outlined in VAMC Memorandum "Occupational Health" 516-05-05-11: During normal duty hours (8:00 am – 4:30 pm), Supervisors will call Occupational Health or accompany an employee to the Occupational Health Unit. For any non-medical emergency occurring outside normal duty hours, employees will be referred to or accompanied to the Emergency Room. The Administrator on Duty (AOD) will report any employee injury to the Occupational Health Unit on the next business day for appropriate follow-up. Any potentially serious employee illness/accident will be referred to the Emergency Room.

In the case of occupational illness, the employee's condition will be evaluated by the Occupational Health Physician, who will then request that the employee seek definitive treatment through a private physician. Employee must make application (Form CA-2) directly to the Workers' Comp Program Manager (05).

Employees will be billed for unauthorized treatment/diagnostic services. Employee(s) who provide(s) false/misleading information to gain free prescription/ diagnostic services will be billed and may face disciplinary/adverse action. Those employees, who are Veterans and wish to receive care as Veterans, must apply for Ambulatory Care Services prior to receiving medical treatment.

Only emergencies (i.e., needle punctures, cuts, acute onset of illness, traumatic job injuries, etc.) will be fully evaluated and treated anytime during the work shift. Before departing station, if you are sent off duty by the personnel physician, you will need to contact your Supervisor and the Training Director.

Hurricanes, Weather Events and Disasters:

The Office of Academic Affiliations has provided guidance related to trainees who may be impacted by significant weather events/disasters. Should an anticipated or unexpected weather event threaten our area the Bay Pines Training Program will assist trainees in the following ways to minimize the impact on training:

Coping and access to information and resources:

We recognize that Trainees are often new to our geographic region and may be disconnected from their normal social support network. The Training Director will provide trainees information on storm safety and resources (local and facility based). The Employee Assistance Program is available should a Trainee experience significant stress from an event. Cellular phones are often the first communication systems to be lost in a storm, but they are also the first system to be restored. Trainees will be provided with the cellular number of the Training Director to report their status following the storm.

Mandatory evacuations/clinic closure:

Psychology Fellows may be considered for Authorized Absence coded as Weather/Safety Leave. Training Director and/or Supervisors may provide trainees with readings and other supplemental assignments to complete while on authorized absence. This may enable trainees to continue documenting and accumulating formal training hours.

After the storm/event – challenges to safe housing/transportation:

If the facility reopens but a Trainee is unable to immediately report for duty at the facility subsequent to storm impacts, the following steps should be taken:

- The Trainee should contact their Training Director and Clinical Supervisors.
- The Trainee should use all available leave (AL and SL).
- When leave is exhausted, the trainee may request advanced leave through Human Resources, which will be earned during the remainder of their training appointment.
- When all available leave is exhausted, and/or no advanced leave is available, the Training Director may contact OAA for further guidance. In special situations, they will recommend that the trainee go on Leave Without Pay status. Discussions between the Trainee, the University affiliate DCT and the Fellowship Training Director should occur to ensure that the Trainee will have the opportunity to meet hours requirements. This may occur as an extension to the training year on a WOP status, or on a limited basis and with pre-approval, OAA may offer training appointment extensions with stipend, to allow Trainees complete required training hours for graduation and licensure requirements.

Liability Insurance:

While performing your duties as a Psychology Fellow at the Bay Pines VAHCS, Fellows are afforded full coverage under the Federal Tort Claims Act for any acts of negligence occurring during performance of their role at this medical center.

All faculty members and trainees of the sponsoring institutions, when at VA health care facilities or on VA assignment at offsite facilities and while furnishing professional services covered by this agreement, will have personal liability protection by the provisions of the Federal Employees Liability Reform and Tort Compensation Act, 28 U.S.C. 2679 (b)-(d).

The Federal Employees Liability Reform and Tort Compensation Act of 1988, Public Law 100-694 (amending 28 U.S.C. 2679(b) and 2679(d)), provides that the exclusive remedy for damage or loss of property, or personal injury or death arising from the negligent or wrongful acts or omissions of all Federal employees, acting within the scope of their employment, will be against the United States. Thus, contracted Psychology trainees from affiliated educational programs will be protected from personal liability afforded to all VA Psychology staff under those stated provisions.

Program Statement on Non-Discrimination:

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, and disability. The BPVAHCS Psychology Fellowship Program extends this definition to mean that no information about the applicants irrelevant to the applicants' potential to succeed in the training program is to be utilized in its selection process.

During the year of Fellowship training, should there be an instance of discrimination experienced or observed by trainees or staff, there is a positive obligation to address the problem so as to minimize psychological harm. Fellows are encouraged to consult with their Clinical Supervisor, Research Mentor, Assistant Chief of MH&BSS, or Training Director for assistance in such matters.

Where this level of resolution is not effective, or the instances are viewed to be systemic, Fellows as well as staff have access to formal procedures (see referenced Medical Center Policies and Procedures at the end of this Handbook). The current local BPVAHCS EEO Program Manager is Tanya Weick, and she is available for any assistance, consultation or to assist in any employee's exercise of their rights.

Program Statement on Diversity

The Department of Veterans Affairs and its component agencies seek to serve the veteran population, which is their charge from the Congress and thus from the American people who elect them. The composition and diversity of the veteran population seeking healthcare from the VA reflect a multiplicity of factors that define American society. People who join the Armed Forces represent a large cross section of that society, and the veteran population who have served their country and are enrolled for health care as a benefit from their service, represent a diverse group defined by that cross section. The BPVAHCS Psychology Fellowship Program seeks to have a diverse staff and trainee population along many dimensions, since the need to bring care that represents the dignity and uniqueness of all VA patients is an organizational mandate that reflects VA values.

The program operates to teach the trainee to identify all the aspects of human diversity (i.e., individual differences) and to bring a heightened awareness of these elements of personhood into their psychological conceptualization and actions. The program staff searches for and aggressively takes opportunities to teach the importance of human diversity and individual differences in real time, as they occur continuously in clinical practice. Fellows are encouraged to question and explore themselves the elements of diversity as they affect human behavior. Discussions with staff regarding the provision of psychological services in the context of human diversity are strongly encouraged, as both staff and Fellows benefit from increased awareness, understanding, and study of human diversity; it is the patient who has the greatest potential benefit.

Filing an EEO Complaint:

As a Fellow, you are protected from acts of discrimination by employees and patients. If you believe you have been discriminated against because of your race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity), national origin, age (40 years and over), physical or mental disability, genetic information, and/or retaliation, you can use the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) discrimination complaint process. You are also protected from filing a complaint (No Fear Act) and whistleblowing.

Employee Assistance Program

Bay Pines recognizes its employees as one of its most valuable resources. While everyone experiences stress, sometimes the effects of too much stress can disrupt work performance and personal well-being. The EAP and WorkLife Service is designed to help you and your family members deal with problems before they become unmanageable.

Services available to employees through LifeServices EAP include, but are not limited to:

- Personal Counseling
- Family Counseling
- Financial Counseling
- Financial Information and Resources
- Legal Support and Resources
- Work-Life Solutions
- And more

Additional Information can be found by contacting LifeServices EAP directly:

- 1-800-822-4847 or visit www.lifeserviceseap.com
- To access the LifeServices EAP online orientation, please visit: www.lifeserviceseap.com/employees-family/orientation.php

Ethical Conduct:

The Bay Pines VA HCS General Postdoctoral Psychology Fellowship Training Program strives to produce an atmosphere of mutual respect, ethical practice and professionalism as guided by the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2012). Please review the content of the attached 2012 revision of the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct which is available online at:

<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>

Clinical and Didactic Experience Log:

Each Resident is asked to maintain a detailed, weekly log of Didactic Presentation titles/objectives, patient contact services involving assessments, consultations, staffing, treatment planning, supervision, research, and administrative and preparatory activities. This log will be compared to generated reports documenting co-signed consultation and therapy notes in CPRS. This log serves to document exact clinical care activities and the range of experiences acquired on a particular rotation. The second purpose of this log is to provide you with “hard” copy of your experiences should you need later references for various state licensing and professional credentialing activities. Additionally, the Residents will be instructed to maintain documentation within the log of any required administrative, clinical, research or preparatory activities conducted outside of regular tour hours (e.g., preparatory readings for journal club, seminars, meetings held during the lunch hour). These data should be maintained regularly and kept indefinitely for future State

Licensure documentation purposes. The contents of the log will be monitored by the Training Director to ensure you have an adequate number of cases and a diverse workload.

Patient Documentation and Encounter Form Requirements:

Documentation of patient care must conform to JCAHO, VHSRA, Medical Center and service policies, as well as licensing requirements. These most often occur as medical record “progress notes” and completion of provider requested “consults”.

Non-routine consults (STAT, ASAP, Today, etc.) will be responded to in compliance with relevant BPVAHCS timeliness policies regarding priority designation. In general, Individual and Group SOAPE progress notes are to be completed on the day the patient is seen/service provided.

Actual service provided to patient is to be noted on the medical record note in the form of a CPT billing code and number of units. All providers involved in the care must be documented with appropriate CPT codes assigned for each provider’s service. A diagnosis must be provided in each individual or group note. In addition, the Resident is expected to conduct and document a lethality assessment for each contact. It is also necessary to document the involvement of the Psychologist supervising your services and your status as a Psychology Resident. The staff practitioner directs the care of the patient and meaningful involvement with each case seen is essential. The staff members’ involvement needs to be reflected in (a) co-signature and (b) notes written by the Residents or (b) in an addendum written by the Supervisor. Examples of acceptable Resident statements documenting involvement of the supervisor include;

"As a pre-licensed Psychology Resident, John Doe, PhD is working under the close supervision of licensed Supervising Psychologist, Amy G Dala, PhD. The Veteran was educated on the purpose of the mental health service and limits to confidentiality. Prior to rendering services, the Veteran has been informed that this clinician is unlicensed and functioning under the direction and supervision of Dr. Amy G Dala. The Veteran provided oral informed consent for the mental health services. General service delivery, results and write-up have been reviewed and discussed with Dr. Amy G Dala and her co-signature indicates concurrence with the findings, diagnostic conceptualization and recommendations."

The Primary Supervisor is the responsible individual for all patient care provided by psychology Residents. When Residents change rotations or graduate, the supervisor is responsible for the care of the patients during the remainder of that episode of care. A progress note should be entered into the medical record by the supervisor stating that, “Resident X is no longer treating patient Z under my supervision.” The supervisor remains responsible for the psychological care of patient “Z” until the conclusion of this episode of care or referral to another provider. It is the responsibility of the Resident to ensure a smooth transition of care and follow-up for any patients not carried over to another rotation.

There is an old VA adage that “if it’s not in the chart, it doesn’t exist.” Timely completion of consults and documentation of care/progress are very important to the provision of coordinated, high-quality patient care. Moreover, it is ESSENTIAL to complete accurate encounter forms for all patient visits.

In general, documentation of lethality assessment and risk level, education on limits to confidentiality (including your status as a Resident) and provision of oral informed consent and discussion of limits to confidentiality for all services/ treatment should be documented in every encounter (note, consult).

Baseline and Exit Measures:

APA guidelines require Postdoctoral sites to have a clear and coherent curriculum plan that provides a formal, quantitative baseline and exiting measures in designated competency areas. This is measured primarily with the use of the General Postdoctoral Psychology Evaluations. Formal evaluations in the form of immediate written feedback related to the Mental Health Grand Rounds Presentations, Journal Club Facilitation, and Ethics Vignettes will occur over the course of the Residency and be incorporated into the Mid and End of Rotation General Postdoctoral Psychology Evaluations.

Wellness and Self-care:

VA has as statutory mission to train clinicians for VA and the nation. Clinical learning is an active process, and this requires that trainees are well. Trainee wellness is assessed prior to the initiation of training via the TQCVL form based on review of physical and other health records submitted, and then both informally and formally, as needed, during the training appointment. As trainees provide supervised clinical care like regular clinical staff, trainees need to be well throughout their training appointments.

Wellness during Training: Advanced clinical training experiences are exciting, challenging, and stressful. Despite efforts to support Residents, they may succumb to illnesses, including acute mental health conditions. Like the assessment of wellness prior to the onset of training, wellness is a key requirement throughout a clinical training appointment. When wellness issues arise, it is important to consider the safety of the Resident and patients.

Of course, all clinicians need to learn to self-monitor their health status so they can decide when to take time to rest and/or seek professional assistance. Thus, it is common to address self-care and wellness as part of training and supervision. When things work well, Residents are able to self-monitor and are open to discussing how the work is affecting them and how their wellness affects their clinical work. Often, Residency is a time in which a Resident discovers their own personal limits, and supervision can assist with this, preparing Residents to effectively manage stress as a professional. When Residents are able self-assess and learn to manage their wellness, this is ideal. When Residents deny infirmities or do not address wellness issues, these issues can be problematic.

Informal Training Supervision: Supervision typically provides the format for teaching, discussion, and processing of clinical knowledge, reactions to providing clinical care, and ancillary issues affecting patient care like wellness of the Resident provider. In achieving core competencies/skills, it is normal for supervisors to provide guidance and feedback and facilitate the growth of the Resident.

Formal Remediation Plans: Wellness issues that impact Resident performance or conduct are not always amenable to informal supervision. Furthermore, wellness issue may be so severe that they

need to be more immediately addressed. In these cases, more formal remediation plans should be developed. Clear feedback should be given, plans for improvement should be developed, achievable goals should be developed, special assistance, if required, should be offered if feasible, and a timeline for improvement should be developed.

In the case where a Resident is ill, they should be encouraged to seek and follow professional guidance leading to recovery and a restoration of functioning. Although training goals, core competencies, and required accumulation of training hours need to be achieved, generally, there is latitude on providing sick leave, annual leave, and, with permission from OAA, longer leave without pay status for longer periods of convalescence to accommodate an illness and recovery period.

Recommendations When a Resident Appears Impaired, Denies Illness, and Does not Voluntarily Seek Health Care Evaluation and Guidance: When supervisors, ancillary staff, trainee peers, or TD become concerned about the wellness of a Resident, the supervisor or TD should first address this with the Resident. On the one hand, clinical supervisors are trained to assess and treat patients. Nonetheless, as they are in a supervisor-Resident role and not a doctor-patient relationship, supervisors may not be best individuals to formally assess or manage the health of a Resident. The TD should discuss the concerns with the Resident and confirm the observations of others. If the TD questions the ability of the Resident to effectively provide patient care and/or fully benefit from the training program due to suspected health reasons, the Resident should be placed on administrative status until the Resident is cleared for duty. It is critically important to address these concerns directly, but with kindness and tact. Residents are likely to be embarrassed with these circumstances, and therefore it is critically important to make these process as non-punitive as possible.

Residents may seek external professional assessment, as approved by facility leadership and Human Resources. Alternatively, the TD may consult IGA, HR or VA Occupational Health and request a wellness assessment or formal Fitness for Duty Evaluation prior to returning to Residency training. As noted above, latitude can be granted for rest and recovery. If a health condition is identified in an assessment, the Resident has the right to request reasonable accommodation for their condition. Generally, when returning to duty after a period of absence, Residents should be cleared, at a minimum, by VA Occupational Health.

REASONABLE ACCOMODATIONS

Under federal law, employers are required to make reasonable accommodation for most health conditions, when requested by an employee/Resident. In these circumstances, the TD will consult with the Executive TC, ACOS, OAA, Education Service, HR, Legal, and/or the Local Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator. Although core competencies and total training time must be achieved, there is often latitude and assistance available to support Residents in completing their training programs. Note that a reasonable accommodation is considered when requested. The rules are clear that the Resident/employee would initiate such a consideration with a request.

DUE PROCESS, REMEDIATION OF PROBLEMATIC RESDIENT PERFORMANCE, AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

This section provides a definition of problematic Resident performance and how these situations are handled by the program, as well as a discussion of due process and grievance procedures.

The Residency program follows due process guidelines to assure that decisions are fair and nondiscriminatory. During Orientation with the Training Director, fellows review and discuss written information regarding expected performance and conduct; the evaluation process, including the format and schedule of evaluations; procedures for making decisions about problematic performance and/or conduct; remediation plans for identified problems, including time frames and consequences for failure to rectify problems and procedures for appealing the program's decisions or actions. At the end of orientation, Fellows sign a form indicating that they have read and understood these policies.

Problematic Resident Performance and/or Conduct

The following describes the program's procedures for identifying, assessing, and, if necessary, remediating problematic Resident performance.

Definition of Problematic Behaviors

Problematic behaviors are broadly defined as those behaviors that disrupt the Resident's professional role and ability to perform required job duties, including the quality of: the Resident's clinical services; his or her relationships with peers, supervisors, or other staff; and his or her ability to comply with appropriate standards of professional and/or ethical behavior.

Problematic behaviors may be the result of the Resident's inability or unwillingness to a) acquire professional standards and skills that reach an acceptable level of competency, or b) to control personal issues or stress.

Behaviors reach a problematic level when they include one or more of the following characteristics:

- The Resident does not acknowledge, understand, or address the problem
- The problem is not merely a deficit in skills, which could be rectified by further instruction and training
- The Resident's behavior does not improve as a function of feedback, remediation, effort, and/or time
- The professional services provided by the Resident are negatively affected
- The problem affects more than one area of professional functioning
- The problem requires a disproportionate amount of attention from training supervisors

Some examples of problematic behaviors include:

- Engaging in dual role relationships
- Violating patient confidentiality and or privacy
- Failure to respect appropriate boundaries
- Failure to identify and report patients' high-risk behaviors
- Failure to complete written work in accordance with supervisor and/or program guidelines
- Treating patients, peers, and/or supervisors in a disrespectful or unprofessional manner
- Plagiarizing the work of others or giving one's work to others to complete
- Repeated tardiness
- Unauthorized absences

NOTE: this list is not exhaustive. Problematic behaviors also include behaviors discouraged or prohibited by APA's Ethical Guidelines and VA policies and procedures.

Remediation of Problematic Performance and/or Conduct

It should be noted that every effort is made to create a climate of access and collegiality within the program. The TD is actively involved in monitoring the training program and frequently checks informally with Residents and Supervisors regarding Residents' progress and potential problems. In addition, regular General Postdoctoral Training Subcommittee and General TC Supervision of Supervision meetings are held once a month to provide another forum for discovery and resolution of potential problems. Residents are encouraged to raise concerns with the TD as they arise. It is our goal to help each Resident reach his/her full potential as a developing professional. Supervisory feedback that facilitates such professional growth is essential to achieving this goal.

The General Postdoctoral Training Subcommittee consists of all General Postdoctoral Supervisors involved in Residency training. This subcommittee meets once per month to discuss training issues, attainment of postdoctoral competencies and programmatic development. Supervisors discuss skills and areas of strength, as well as concerns regarding clinical or professional performance and conduct. Residents also receive direct feedback from their Primary Supervisors in the form of both formal and informal evaluations that occur at regularly scheduled intervals throughout each year. All written evaluations become a part of the Resident's permanent file with the Psychology Section. These records are maintained by the TD and are kept in secure, locked cabinets.

Residents are continuously evaluated and informed about their performance with regard to achieving the training aims and competencies of the program. It is hoped that Residents and supervisors establish a working professional relationship in which constructive feedback can be given and received. During the evaluation process, the Resident and Supervisor discuss such feedback and, in most cases, reach a resolution about how to address any difficulties. Although Residents are formally evaluated at regular intervals (see previous section on the Evaluation Process), problematic behaviors may arise and need to be addressed at any given time.

If the Resident fails to meet expectations at the time of the written evaluation, or at any time a Supervisor observes serious deficiencies which have not improved through ongoing supervision, procedures to address problematic performance and/or conduct would be implemented. These include:

- 1.) Supervisor meets with TD and/or Training Committee to assess the seriousness of Resident's deficient performance, probable causes, and actions to be taken. As part of this process, any deficient evaluation(s) are reviewed.
- 2.) After a thorough review of all available information, the TD, Supervisor and/or Training Committee may adopt one or more of the following steps, as appropriate:
 - A.) No further action is warranted.
 - B.) Informal Remediation – the supervisor(s) may seek the input of the Training Committee or ACOS and decide that the problem(s) are best dealt within ongoing supervision.

C.) Formal Remediation – This is a written statement issued to the Resident which includes, but is not limited to, the following information:

- A description of the problematic behavior(s)
- Documentation that the ACOS and Training Committee is aware of and concerned about the problematic behavior(s) and that this has been discussed with the Resident
- A remediation plan to address the problem(s) within a specified time frame.

Remediation plans set clear objectives and identify procedures for meeting those objectives.

Possible remedial steps include but are not limited to:

- o Increased level of supervision, either with the same or other supervisors.
- o Additional readings or classes.
- o Changes in the format or areas of emphasis in supervision.
- o Recommendation or requirement of personal therapy, including clear objectives which the therapy should address.
- o Recommendation or requirement for further training to be undertaken.
- o Recommendation or requirement of a leave of absence (with time to be made up at no cost to the institution).
- o Requirement that an element of a rotation be repeated and or involvement with legal representatives.

The Resident is also invited to provide a written statement regarding the identified problem(s). As outlined in the remediation plan, the supervisor, TD, and Resident will meet to discuss Resident's progress at a specified reassessment date. The TD documents the outcome and gives written notification to the Resident and Supervisor(s) and ACOS. VA Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) and the facility Education Service and Human Resources will also be notified when a formal remediation plan has been implemented and may be utilized by the program for further consultation. ***If the General Postdoctoral Psychology TD is in a dual role of also being the Residents Primary Supervisor, the Neuropsychology Fellowship TD will assume the Administrative role of TD for the Formal Remediation Plan and Process to eliminate bias and promote fairness.

Probation Notice

This step is implemented when problematic behavior(s) are deemed to be more serious by the TD/ACOS and Training Committee and/or when repeated efforts at remediation have not resolved the issue. The Resident will be given written statement that includes the following documentation:

- A description of any previous efforts to rectify the problem(s)
- Notification of and/or consultation as required with OAA, APPIC/APPCN, HR, Legal and other resources (e.g., VAPTC) regarding further courses of action
- Specific recommendations for resolving the problem(s)
- A specified time frame for the probation during which the problem is expected to be rectified and procedures for assessing this.

Again, as part of this process, the Resident is invited to provide a written statement regarding the identified problem(s). As outlined in the probation notice, the Supervisor(s), TD, ACOS, Resident, and a representative from OAA or Education Service or HR (optional) and Legal will meet to discuss Resident's progress at the end of the probationary period. The TD documents the outcome

and gives written notification to Resident, Supervisor, ACOS, VA OAA, Education Service, and the facility Chief of Human Resources.

Termination

If a Resident on Probation has not improved sufficiently under the conditions specified in the Probation Notice, termination will be discussed by the TD, Training Committee and ACOS, as well as OAA, Education Service, the facility HR Chief and if required, APPIC/APPCN and Legal. In some circumstances a Resident may choose to withdraw from the program rather than being terminated. The final decision regarding the Resident's passing is made by TD and ACOS/Chief of Psychology, based on the input of the TC and other governing bodies, and all written evaluations and other documentation. If it is decided to terminate the Residency, the Resident will be informed in writing by TD that he/she will not successfully complete the Residency. The Resident, VA OAA, Education Service, APPIC/APPCN and HR will be informed of the decision in writing.

All documentation related to the formal and informal remediation process becomes part of the Resident's permanent file with the Psychology Section. These records are maintained by the TD and are kept in secure, locked cabinets.

Unethical or Illegal Behavior

Any illegal or unethical conduct by a Resident will be brought to the attention of the TD and ACOS who will document the issue in writing, and consult with the appropriate parties, depending on the situation (see description below).

Examples of significant infractions include but are not limited to:

- 1.) Violation of ethical standards for the discipline, for the training program, or for government employees.
- 2.) Violation of VA regulations or applicable Federal, state, or local laws.
- 3.) Disruptive, abusive, intimidating, or other behavior that disturbs the workplace environment or that interferes or might reasonably be expected to interfere with veteran care. Disruptive behaviors include profane or demeaning language, sexual comments or innuendo, outbursts of anger, throwing objects, serious boundary violations with staff or veterans, inappropriate health record entries, and unethical, illegal, or dishonest behavior.

Depending on the situation and the time sensitivity of the issues, the TD may consult with the ACOS, OAA, Education Service, Training Committee, APPIC/APPCN, HR and or Legal to get further information and/or guidance. Following review of the issues, the Training Committee may recommend either informal resolution steps, formal remediation procedures, formal probation, or termination of the Resident from the program. Probationary status will be communicated to the Resident, VA OAA, Education Service, APPIC/APPCN and HR in writing and will specify all requisite guidelines for successful completion of the program. Any violations of the conditions outlined in the Probation Notice will result in the immediate termination of the Resident from the program.

The TD may also consult with the TC, ACOS, Human Resources, APIC/APPCN, Legal/regional counsel, other members of hospital leadership (e.g., Privacy Officer, Safety Officer, EEO Officer, Chief of Staff, Facility Director, etc.), VA OAA, Education Service in situations where there may be an ethical or criminal violation. Such infractions may be grounds for immediate dismissal. In

addition, the TD may immediately put the Resident on administrative duties or on administrative leave while the situation is being investigated. Under certain circumstances, the Residency program may be required to alert other professional organizations (e.g., APPIC/APPCN, APA, state licensing boards) regarding unethical or illegal behavior on the part of a Resident.

As described in the previous section on remediation of problematic performance and/or conduct, at any stage of the process, the Resident may request assistance and/or consultation outside of the program and utilize the resources listed above.

All documentation related to serious infractions becomes part of the Resident's permanent file with the Psychology Service. These records are maintained by the TD and kept in secure, locked cabinets in the coordinator's office.

Regrettably, you may observe poor professional conduct, disregard for hospital procedures/policies or possibly ethical or illegal misconduct on the part of another member of the hospital staff. Should this occur, seek immediate consultation from a member of the Psychology Staff to assist you with assessment, understanding and any subsequent action that may be indicated. Be aware that the hospital has mandatory reporting procedures for patient abuse/exploitation.

GRIEVANCE

Although infrequent, differences in perspective may arise between a Resident and a Supervisor or another Medical staff member, which do not appear resolvable at the Supervisor/Staff-Resident level. Should this occur, the following procedures can be followed by a Resident:

- 1.) The Resident will meet individually with the Training Director within 1 week of reporting grievance to discuss grievance and explore strategies to resolve disagreement/conflict/grievance at the Resident-Supervisor/Staff Member level. Should the conflict exist between the Resident and the Training Director serving as a Primary Supervisor on a research project or within a rotation, the Resident will meet individually with the General Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Director or Assistant Chief of MH&BSS. If grievance cannot be satisfactorily resolved by all parties at this level within 10 working days...
- 2.) The Resident and Supervisor will meet with the Training Director (or Postdoctoral TD or Assistant Chief of MH&BSS if required due to Residency TD conflict) to allow assessment of the problem. If satisfactory resolution has not been reached within 10 working days....
- 3.) The Resident and Supervisor will meet with the Executive Steering Committee, made up of the General Postdoctoral Psychology Training Director, Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Training Director, Practicum Training Director and Assistant Chief of MH&BSS to attempt to develop a workable solution. If satisfactory resolution has not been reached within 10 working days....
- 4.) The Supervisor and Resident will meet with a fully convened Psychology Training Committee. The committee as a whole, will then attempt to develop a workable solution. If satisfactory resolution has not been reached within 10 working days....

5.) The Supervisor and Resident will meet with the Assistant Chief, Mental Health & Behavioral Sciences Service (MH&BSS) who will review all pertinent data and make a final determination. If the Assistant Chief, Mental Health & Behavioral Sciences Service's decisions are unacceptable to either individual, the Assistant Chief, (MH&BSS) will outline any further options available as per local and VHA policy.

At any stage of the process, a Resident may request additional assistance and/or consultation; please see section below on grievances. Residents may also request assistance and/or consultation outside of the program. Resources for outside consultation include:

VA Office of Resolution Management (ORM)

Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Resolution Management (08)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420
1-202-501-2800 or Toll Free 1-888- 737-3361
<http://www4.va.gov/orm/>

This department within the VA has responsibility for providing a variety of services and programs to prevent, resolve, and process workplace disputes in a timely and high-quality manner. These services and programs include:

- Prevention: programs that ensure that employees and managers understand the characteristics of a healthy work environment and have the tools to address workplace disputes.
- Early Resolution: ORM serves as a resource for the resolution of workplace disputes. ORM has been designated as the lead organization for workplace alternative dispute resolution (ADR) within VA. This form of mediation available to all VA employees. Mediation is a process in which an impartial person, the mediator, helps people having a dispute to talk with each other and resolve their differences. The mediator does not decide who is right or wrong but rather assists the persons involved create their own unique solution to their problem. VA mediators are fellow VA employees who have voluntarily agreed to mediate workplace disputes. They are specially trained and skilled in mediation techniques and conflict resolution. In electing to use mediation, an employee does not give up any other rights.
- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Complaint Processing

Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC)

APPIC has established both an Informal Problem Consultation process and a Formal Complaint process in order to address issues and concerns that may arise during the Residency training year.
<http://appic.org/Problem-Consultation>

Informal Problem Consultation (IPC) Jason Williams, Psy.D. (720) 777-8108

Chair, APPIC Board of Directors
Formal Complaints Elihu Turkel, Ph.D.
Chair, APPIC Standards and Review Committee
turkel@lij.edu

APA Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation:

750 First Street, NE

Washington, DC 20002-4242
(202) 336-5979
<http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation>

Independent legal counsel

Please note that union representation is not available to Residents as they are not union members under conditions of their VA term-appointment.

PREVIOUS TRAINEES

Applications are encouraged from all geographical areas. In previous years, Trainees have been enrolled from a variety of University and professional school settings throughout the United States including, University of South Florida, Ohio State University, Auburn University, Florida Institute of Technology, Drexel University, University of South Carolina, Texas Tech. University, the University of Minnesota, Adelphi University, University of Mississippi, the Virginia Consortium, University of Florida, Georgia State University, University of California, Santa Barbara, Hahnemann University, Ohio University, University of Connecticut, University of Denver, University of Southern Mississippi, University of Georgia, Penn State University, Indiana State University, University of South Dakota, Wright State University, University of Louisville, University of Miami, University of Missouri - St Louis, Argosy University – Atlanta, Argosy University - Washington, DC., Loma Linda University, University of Texas at Austin, Lehigh University, LaSalle University - PA, Regent University - Virginia Beach, Pacific Graduate School of Psychology – Palo Alto, Emory University, University of Tulsa, University of Indianapolis, University of Mississippi, Alliant Int'l University/California School of Professional Psychology – San Francisco, University of Houston, Virginia Commonwealth University, Spalding University, Wright Institute, University of Central Florida, Virginia Tech, Fuller Theological Seminary, Nova Southeastern University, Southern Methodist University, Central Michigan University, Idaho State University, Spalding University, William James College, University of Tulsa, University of Memphis, Northern Illinois University, Western Michigan University, Long Island University; Yeshiva University, Adler University Chicago, and Northern Illinois University.

Such diversity in training, theoretical perspectives, cultural experiences, and interests enhances our program and ensures both challenging and valuable professional growth for our Interns.

GRADUATES OF BAY PINES FELLOWSHIP

Of particular interest to applicants is the successful transition of our graduating Fellows to professional positions. Former Fellows are now employed in a variety of institutional and private practice settings in the Tampa Bay area, as well as in several other areas of the country

<p>TABLE C-23-P: POSTDOCTORAL RESIDENCY ADMISSIONS, SUPPORT, AND INITIAL PLACEMENT DATA</p> <p>Date Program Tables are updated: 07/30/21</p> <p>Program Disclosures</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td> <p>Does the program or institution require students, trainees, and/or staff (faculty) to comply with specific policies or practices related to the institution's affiliation or purpose? Such policies or practices may include, but are not limited to, admissions, hiring, retention policies, and/or requirements for completion that express mission and values?</p> </td> <td> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <p>If yes, provide website link (or content from brochure) where this specific information is presented:</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <p></p> </td> </tr> </table>		<p>Does the program or institution require students, trainees, and/or staff (faculty) to comply with specific policies or practices related to the institution's affiliation or purpose? Such policies or practices may include, but are not limited to, admissions, hiring, retention policies, and/or requirements for completion that express mission and values?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>If yes, provide website link (or content from brochure) where this specific information is presented:</p>		<p></p>	
<p>Does the program or institution require students, trainees, and/or staff (faculty) to comply with specific policies or practices related to the institution's affiliation or purpose? Such policies or practices may include, but are not limited to, admissions, hiring, retention policies, and/or requirements for completion that express mission and values?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>						
<p>If yes, provide website link (or content from brochure) where this specific information is presented:</p>							
<p></p>							

Program Disclosures

<p>Does the program or institution require students, trainees, and/or staff (faculty) to comply with specific policies or practices related to the institution's affiliation or purpose? Such policies or practices may include, but are not limited to, admissions, hiring, retention policies, and/or requirements for completion that express mission and values?</p>	<p>___ Yes</p> <p><u>X</u> No</p>
<p>If yes, provide website link (or content from brochure) where this specific information is presented:</p>	

Briefly describe in narrative form important information to assist potential applicants in assessing their likely fit with your program. This description must be consistent with the program's policies on intern selection and practicum and academic preparation requirements:

We are recruiting current doctoral level graduate school applicants who will have completed their doctoral program prior to the start of the postdoctoral training year. Prospective fellows should have solid foundational training and experience in both intervention and assessment at the internship and practicum level, be interested in learning and motivated to develop professional competencies in the practice of psychology during the fellowship year. We adhere to a Scholar-Practitioner model which supports the mutual integration of science and practice by promoting a scientific attitude and approach to clinical activities. The training focus is on direct clinical work that is informed by evidenced based practice. It is our goal to expose fellows to a diverse patient population, offer supervision and training in multiple intervention and assessment techniques, models, and theoretical viewpoints, all supported by the relevant scientific literature. Further, postdoctoral fellows receive specialized training in an area of emphasis, either trauma-related or substance abuse treatment. Based upon this philosophy, fellows receive broad,

comprehensive training with one of the aforementioned emphases, in preparation for entry-level, generalist practice in professional psychology.

Describe any other required minimum criteria used to screen applicants:

Our initial screening procedures of the applicants' submission through the APPA CAS system include a review of graduate program accreditation status, status of dissertation or doctoral-level project, and status of progress during predoctoral internship. In addition, because fellows are considered Federal employees, we screen for the following federal hiring requirements:

1. U.S. citizenship. VA is unable to consider applications from anyone who is not currently a U.S. citizen. Verification of citizenship is required following selection.
2. A male applicant born after 12/31/1959 must have registered for the draft by age 26 to be eligible for any US government employment, including selection as a paid VA trainee.

Financial and Other Benefit Support for Upcoming Training Year*

Annual Stipend/Salary for Full-time Residents	\$46,334	
Annual Stipend/Salary for Half-time Residents	N/A	
Program provides access to medical insurance for resident?	Yes	
If access to medical insurance is provided:		
Trainee contribution to cost required?	Yes	
Coverage of family member(s) available?	Yes	
Coverage of legally married partner available?	Yes	
Coverage of domestic partner available?		No
Hours of Annual Paid Personal Time Off (PTO and/or Vacation)	13	
Hours of Annual Paid Sick Leave	13	
In the event of medical conditions and/or family needs that require extended leave, does the program allow reasonable unpaid leave to interns/residents in excess of personal time off and sick leave?	Yes	
Other Benefits (please describe): 11 Federal Holidays off; up to 8 days authorized absence for approved professional activities (e.g., conferences, workshops, job interviews, etc.)		

*Note. Programs are not required by the Commission on Accreditation to provide all benefits listed in this table

Initial Post-Residency Positions

(Provide an Aggregated Tally for the Preceding 3 Cohorts)

	2018-2021	
Total # of residents who were in the 3 cohorts	12	
Total # of residents who remain in training in the residency program	0	
	PD	EP
Academic teaching		1
Community mental health center		
Consortium		
University Counseling Center		
Hospital/Medical Center		
Veterans Affairs Health Care System		8
Psychiatric facility		
Correctional facility		
Health maintenance organization		
School district/system		
Independent practice setting		3
Other		

Note: “PD” = Post-doctoral residency position; “EP” = Employed Position. Each individual represented in this table should be counted only one time. For former trainees working in more than one setting, select the setting that represents their primary position.

TRAINING ENVIRONMENT



Living Environment:

The Bay Pines VA Health Care System is in Bay Pines, Florida, close to the major cities of St. Petersburg and Tampa in what is called, the Tampa Bay area. The 2010 Census states Tampa is third largest city in the Southeastern United States, behind Miami and Atlanta. The "Greater Tampa Bay" area has just over 4 million residents and generally includes the Tampa and Sarasota metro areas. St. Petersburg, which is located roughly 15 minutes from Tampa on the opposite side of the Bay, is the fourth largest city in the state of Florida, which is home to roughly 4 million residents. Census 2006 data revealed the median income for a household for the Tampa Bay area is \$39,602. English as a first language accounted for 77.43% of all residents, while Spanish accounted for 17.76%. The Tampa Bay area provides an array of cultural opportunities including numerous festivals, LGBTQ events, music venues, advocacy groups and involvement in Political and faith communities.

Weather

With a purported average of some 360 days of sunshine each year, Tampa is nicknamed "The Sunshine City." For that reason, the city and surrounding area of St. Pete is a popular tourist, and retirement destination, especially for those in the United States from colder Northern climates – particularly New York City, Detroit, and Chicago. The Tampa Bay Area has a humid subtropical climate with a definite rainy season from June through September and the area is occasionally visited by tropical storms and hurricanes. The last time a hurricane directly struck the area was in 1921. Many portions of the area, especially along the bay and in south St. Petersburg have tropical microclimates. Royal palms and coconut palms, as well as other tropicals, grow to maturity and fruit. Average temperatures range from 54 to 90, with the warmest months during the summer.

Schools

Tampa hosts several well-known colleges and university, including the University of South Florida, Tampa University, Florida Metropolitan and Stetson school of law among others. St. Petersburg has a branch of the state university, as well as St. Petersburg College and Eckerd College. The Poynter Institute, a school for journalists, future journalists, and teachers of journalism, is also located in St. Petersburg.

Beaches and Parks

The Tampa Bay area is home to more than a dozen Florida State Parks and Historic Sites including Caladesi Island State Park, recently named America's top beach destination by Dr. Beach and known to beachcombers as a shell-seeker's paradise; Hillsborough River State Park in Hillsborough County, where the river tumbles over outcroppings of Suwannee limestone, creating a series of rapids; and Myakka River State Park in Sarasota County, one of the state's largest parks, which hikers can venture through pine flatwoods, over marsh and swamp and across a dry prairie.

St Pete area hosts numerous parks and the Pinellas Trail a 34-mile-long trail where one can safely enjoy bicycle riding, strolling, or jogging. The Pinellas Trail is truly one of Florida's premier urban trails. Stretching from Tarpon Springs to St. Petersburg, the trail links some of Pinellas County's most picturesque parks, scenic coastal areas, and residential neighborhoods. Boyd Hill Nature Park located on Lake Maggiore is a 245-acre (0.99 km²) preserve where you can see many of the endangered plants and rare wildlife of Tampa bay. There is a bird exhibit which houses bald

eagles, owls, hawks, and other species. St. Petersburg is well regarded for its beaches. In 2005, Fort Desoto was rated the number one beach in America by the annual Dr. Beach rankings. Trip Advisor also has the beach ranked number one in the nation for 2008. Recently, St. Petersburg has become known and regarded as one of America's most livable cities.

Travel

Tampa International Airport provides air transportation for most passengers. Smaller airlines, with destinations to smaller cities and towns, operate at St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport, with most tenants providing only seasonal services. Orlando and Sarasota offer major airports as well and are within 1 ½ hours driving time from the Tampa Bay area.

Amtrak services Tampa via the Tampa Union Train Station is located in a historic building near the port between downtown and Ybor City. The Silver Star reverses its direction at Tampa Union Station on its way between Miami and New York.

The Port of Tampa is located downtown and hosts several cruise lines.

Mass Transit

The Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) operates streetcars as well as the bus system in Tampa. HART has a signed transit deal with the University of South Florida, allowing students to ride for free on most bus routes. In addition, students from several other colleges and universities can purchase passes at half price from their school. The TECO Line Streetcar System, which links Ybor City, the Channel District and Downtown Tampa. Mass transit in St. Pete is provided by the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA). There is also a sightseeing trolley, called The Looper that travels to key downtown destinations daily.

TAMPA BAY REGION ART AND CULTURAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

Florida's temperate climate and population diversity makes it a natural venue for many fun, and educational outdoor events and community cultural events, especially those that celebrate the state's sizable Hispanic and Caribbean populations. Moving to the Tampa Bay region won't disappoint! You can experience and celebrate Florida's unique cultural makeup and contributions – through music, film, presentations, parades, festivals and more. Here are a few of our monthly and seasonal opportunities! For more information consult the Visit Tampa Bay website:

<https://www.visittampabay.com/tampa-events/>

JANUARY EVENTS

Tampa Bay Black Heritage Festival

This ten-day African American festival ushers in the Martin Luther King Holiday Weekend in Tampa Bay, a vibrant region that embodies diversity. It highlights the contributions of African Americans in the U.S. and how they've impacted the country. It includes live entertainment, cultural events, health tutorials, business seminars, renowned speakers, food, and craft vendors, plus a music fest featuring national recording artists.

Where: Tampa

Web: tampablackheritage.org

Tocobaga Indian Mound in Philippe Park - On the shores of Old Tampa Bay, Safety Harbor Mound resides behind shelter #2 at Philippe Park, where you can climb to the top of the ancient structure. Nearby Safety Harbor Museum of Regional History, located on the site of a Tocobaga Indian mound, displays artifacts that were found in it, dating back to the Safety Harbor culture, 1500 to 1700 A.D.

Where: Safety Harbor, year round

Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center - "Weeden Island culture," dated from A.D. 200 to 900, was first identified at Weedon Island Preserve, leaving sherds of pottery and other proof of existence in shell mounds excavated by the Smithsonian Institution in the 1920s.

Where: St Petersburg, year round

"CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR!" HOLIDAY HOME TOUR - Elaborate, elegant, over-the-top designer Christmas decorations in one of Florida's most historic mansions. The 1886 "Gilded Age" Victorian Stetson Mansion has been recently been listed as one of the "Top 10 Things to do in Florida" by Tripadvisor. Reservations required.

Where: Stetson Mansion, 1031 Camphor Ln, DeLand, FL 32720

Web: stetsonmansion.com/

GASPARILLA PIRATE FEST – Visitors from all over the country swoop in to celebrate as bead-wielding pirates invade the City of Tampa, beginning with a boat parade and brunch, a parade along Bayshore Boulevard and a street festival that draws thousands.

Where: Multiple locations in Tampa

Web: gasparillaextravaganza.com

COLOR IN MOTION 5K – Begin at the starting line in white clothing and finish covered in splashes of vibrant pink, green, yellow, blue, and orange. Join others in this moving rainbow of fitness to stay on top of your New Year's resolution goals.

Where: Artegon Marketplace, Orlando

Web: colorinmotion5k.com/Orlando

MANATEE COUNTY FAIR – This 11-day funfest recently turned 100 and features first class stage shows, national concert acts, midway rides, livestock shows, auctions, competitions, tons of kids' activities and of course, lots of corn dogs and cotton candy and other tasty fair food.

Where: Manatee County Fairgrounds, Palmetto

Web: manateecountyfair.com

FELLSMERE FROG LEG FESTIVAL – Hop on over to this annual event with 80,000 other folks.

Highlights include: yummy frog's leg and gator tail dinners, frog jumping contests, hot legs contests, carnival rides, Red Neck Olympics (including Pig's Feet Bobbin') great live music and more than 100 booths featuring the work of unique craftsmen and artisans.

Where: Fellsmere

Web: froglegfestival.com

MLK DAY NATIONAL PARADE – Thousands line the streets of St. Petersburg to cheer on booming marching bands, flamboyant dancing teams, colorful floats, waving politicians and other VIPs during what's considered the oldest and largest MLK Day parade in the southeastern U.S.

Where: Downtown St. Petersburg

Web: spmlkparade.com

FLORIDA MANATEE FESTIVAL – Celebrate Florida’s beloved gentle giant with arts and crafts, live music, a beer garden, and live manatee viewing at the nearby Three Sisters Spring. The event is a favorite among locals as it grows and adds attractions each year.

Where: Downtown Crystal River

Web: gomanateefest.com

THE DRAGON FESTIVAL – Part Renaissance Fest and part Highland Games, this event honors a mythical dragon with two days of music, storytelling, jousting, jugglers, tomato-throwing, horseshoe games, ladder climb competitions, fortune telling, sword, archery displays and other shenanigans.

Where: Wickham Pavilion, Melbourne

Web: thedragonfestival.com

ZORA NEALE HURSTON FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS & HUMANITIES – Set in the birthplace of Harlem Renaissance writer and cultural icon Zora Neale Hurston, fans celebrate her legacy and birthday through readings, music, and other programs.

Where: Eatonville

Web: zorafestival.org

PIGS IN Z’HILLS BBQ & BLUES FEST – BBQ connoisseurs, competitors, musicians, car buffs and history and aviation enthusiasts return to feast on award-winning dishes while they enjoy live blues, kids’ activities, aircraft and military history displays, classic cars, a business expo and more.

Where: Zephyrhills Municipal Airport, Zephyrhills

Web: facebook.com/PigzBBQBlues

TAMPA BAY BLACK HERITAGE FESTIVAL – Celebrate African American history and culture with 10 days of music, dancing, cultural events, business seminars, food, health tutorials, and uplifting speakers. The event’s two-day music fest features national performers and is surrounded by “villages” showcasing artists, authors, and children’s activities.

Where: Multiple locations in Tampa

Web: tampablackheritage.org

DESOTO COUNTY FAIR – Florida’s heartland puts on the ultimate county fair, complete with judged exhibits for beef, swine, rabbits, poultry, and goats. The longtime fair – nearly 60 years running – also has carnival rides, cotton candy and corn dogs, arts and crafts booths and a pageant to crown the Fair Queen and Miss DeSoto County.

Where: Arcadia

Web: desotocountyfair.org

SUNSHINE MUSIC FESTIVAL – Chill out in St. Petersburg’s breezy waterfront park and listen to folksy rock tunes by nationally-known artists. Refresh at the wine bar, craft beer tent and food trucks.

Where: Vinoy Park, St. Petersburg

Web: sunshinemusicfestival.com

IMAGES: A FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS – As one of the top outdoor art shows in the southeastern United States, IMAGES draws artist from all over the world to participate in its juried show. The park is filled with group and solo musicians, hands-on activities for kids and a food court.

Where: Riverside Park, New Smyrna Beach

Web: imagesartfestival.org/

TARPON SPRINGS EPIPHANY – Every Jan. 6, Tarpon Springs' Greek community rallies around a chilly body of water and watch boys dive for the golden cross, thrown in by a Greek Orthodox Archbishop. The cross is said to bring good luck all year to he who retrieves it, and it's a tradition that has drawn onlookers and media coverage for decades.

Where: Spring Bayou, Tarpon Springs

Web: visitspteteclearwater.com/tarpon-springs-epiphany

CENTRAL FLORIDA SCOTTISH HIGHLAND GAMES – Fans of Scottish heritage and culture, or simply just those who love to watch a good competition, will love this jam-packed schedule of Highland dancing, bagpipes, archery, shortbread tasting, face painting and other Scot-centric fun.

Where: Central Winds Park, Winter Springs

Web: flascot.com

SEMINOLE SUNCOAST WOOD CARVERS SHOW – Woodcarvers of all skill levels and interests display and sell their pieces of work, which range from realistic-looking mounted game trophies to intricately engraved keepsake boxes to custom-made walking canes. Hobbyists can learn more at seminars and workshops.

Where: Seminole

Web: suncoastwoodcarvers.com

VOLUSIA BEER WEEK – Get to know some of Central Florida's finest and most unique craft beers by kicking off Volusia Beer Week on a bus tour. The bus will pick up in downtown DeLand and make six stops throughout the county to taste at various breweries. The week will continue with a lineup of events to help enlighten those with curious palates.

Where: Volusia County

FEBRUARY EVENTS

GRAPEFRUIT LEAGUE – Florida's glorious winter and spring weather is best enjoyed while watching a spring training game (February through April) as 15 major league baseball teams get ready for the upcoming season.

Where: Multiple locations in central and South Florida, including Kissimmee, Tampa, Sarasota, Jupiter, and Port St. Lucie

Web: floridagrapefruitleague.com

RAPTORFEST – Learn everything you ever wanted to know about Florida's sly and skilled birds of prey at this fascinating fair, which includes live animal encounters, tree climbing, tram tours, kids' activities, art exhibits and a silent auction.

Where: Boyd Hill Nature Preserve, St. Petersburg

Web: raptorfest.org

FLORIDA STATE FAIR – Nearly a half a million people are drawn to the thrill rides, indulgent food, and headline bands at the long-running Florida State Fair, which still awards prizes to prized livestock, best pies, and most impressive quilts. Try the pizza cone or bacon ice cream. (But not before stepping on the Tilt-a-Whirl.)

Where: Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa

Web: floridastatefair.com

CELTIC FAMILY JAMBOREE – Bring the kids, dogs, RV and your own food and drinks to this sleepover campsite festival, a two-day party packed with Celtic folk bands, Highland games and workshops teaching everything from fiddle to Irish dance to yoga.

Where: Sertoma Youth Ranch, Brooksville

Web: celticheritageproductions.com

PASCO COUNTY FAIR – Get a glimpse of Florida country living at the Pasco County Fair's pig races and bull and heifer show, along with days of quirky entertainment such as a sea lion show, a hypnosis and comedy act, alligator displays, pageants and lots of spinning rides and sugary treats.

Where: Dade City

Web: pascocountyfair.com

CLEARWATER BEACH UNCORKED – Nationally acclaimed chefs wow guests with a pre-Valentine's smorgasbord of appetizers, entrée samplings, desserts, fine wine, and microbrew beer. This is one of Clearwater Beach's biggest food and drink events of the year, drawing guests from all over the world.

Where: Clearwater Beach

Web: clearwaterbeachuncorked.com

PINE CASTLE PIONEER DAYS – Local historians honor a piece of Central Florida history – The Pine Castle neighborhood between Orlando and Kissimmee – with a recreation of the area's turn-of-the-century events. Actors play out old dueling scenes and give history lessons, folk bands play, horse carriages give tours and vendors sell handcrafted wares.

Where: Cypress Grove Park, Orlando

Web: pinecastlepioneerdays.org

BEER, BOURBON & BBQ FESTIVAL – This tasty festival makes serves up pulled pork, brisket, sausages, and sides, as well as all-you-care-to-drink beer and bourbon samples. Also: a giant Jenga, trike races and cornhole competitions.

Where: Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, Tampa

Web: beerandbourbon.com

ZEPHYRHILLS AUTO EVENTS SWAP MEET – Car lovers, collectors and families enjoy three days of classic cars on display, food and fun while gearing up for the popular auction featuring more than 300 antique, luxury, exotic, muscle, and classic cars, as well as motorcycles and specialty trucks.

Where: Zephyrhills Festival Park, Zephyrhills

Web: zephyrhillsautoevents.com

LOCALTOPIA – Small and independent businesses showcase everything from smoothies to spa services and dog treats to mom-and-pop cafes. Artists and musicians entertain with exhibits and live music.

Where: Williams Park, downtown St. Petersburg

Web: keepsaintpetersburglocal.org/localtopia

LEESBURG MARDI GRAS – Leesburg paints the town purple and gold, capping off a week of mixers and events with a king and queen-crowning ball and family-friendly street festival. Three parades fill the streets with the finale, featuring stilt walkers, fire eaters, jugglers, costumed pets and, of course, lots and lots of beads.

Where: Downtown Leesburg

Web: leesburgmardigras.com

BAY AREA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL – A museum lot is transformed into a 16th Century village, complete with live armored jousting, dancing, juggling, archery, human chess matches, artisans, and minstrels, as well as marketplace vendor booths and old-time grub and refreshments.

Where: Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI), Tampa

Web: bayarearenfest.com

ENTERPRISE CHILI COOK-OFF – A quaint historic town holds its annual chili cook-off, offering several types of chili to hungry guests, with proceeds benefitting the town's non-profit preservationist group.

Where: Enterprise Heritage Center, Enterprise

Web: oldenterprise.org

HARDEE COUNTY FAIR – Attracting families and participants from all over the rural heartland of Florida, this fair features old fashioned livestock shows, pageants, arts and crafts competitions and rides. Check out the energetic livestock auction and Mexican rodeo.

Where: Hardee County Fairgrounds, Wauchula

Web: hardeecountyfair.org

SEAFOOD AND MUSIC FESTIVAL – Seafood “experts” serve up a delicious spread of crab legs, shrimp, tuna, oysters, crawfish, calamari, lobster mac and cheese, fish and chips, smoked mullet spread and more. There's also top-notch live music.

Where: Port Canaveral

Web: visitportcanaveral.com

DAYTONA 500 – Regarded as one of NASCAR's most prestigious races, this event draws families and adrenaline junkies from all over the world. The popular Sprint FANZONE an exclusive peek into NASCAR garages, driver appearances and autograph sessions, entertainment, kids' bounce houses and historic car displays.

Where: Daytona

Web: daytonainternationalspeedway.com

MARCH EVENTS

RANCH JAM – Bring your whole camper or simply some folding chairs and a picnic blanket for this three-day festival of country, rock, and blues bands. Plenty of beer and food vendors will be on hand to serve the masses, as well as bounce houses and face painters for the kids.

Where: Myakka City

Web: ranchjam.net

SPRING OBSESSION – Get garden-inspired by the array of Florida native plants, orchids, roses, herbs, gingers, fruits, exotics, and other interesting greenery while dropping in on presentations, listening to live music and shopping for unique outdoor artwork and patio furniture.

Where: Munn Park, Lakeland

Web: springobsession.org

SUNLIT FESTIVAL – This nine-day festival devoted to entirely to literary culture is spread among several events at various venues – a Jack Kerouac night at one of the beat writer's favorite dive bars, a huge antique book fair, an evening with local poets, a pub-and-coffee-shop crawl devoted to different eras of writing, and more.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: sunlitfestival.org

UPTOWN ART EXPO – More than 150 of the country's best painters, sculptors, photographers, glassworkers, potters, and crafters bring their best stuff to this juried art show, mingling with some new guests this year – chalk artists. Kids will love the street performances, sweet treats and lemonade stands.

Where: Cranes Roost Park, Altamonte Springs

Web: uptownartexpo.com

WEEKI WACHI SWAMP FEST– Experience Florida swamp culture through fried alligator, black-eyed peas, folk dancers, and singers and a “swamp monster contest” – kids and adults dressed in elaborate costumes depicting moss-covered, slime-drenched creatures of the swamp.

Where: Weeki Wachi Springs State Park

Web: swampfestweekiwachee.com

FIRESTONE GRAND PRIX OF ST. PETERSBURG – This thrilling open-wheel series race twists and turns along a waterfront backdrop, nestled right in downtown St. Petersburg. Even those who don't have track-side tickets can enjoy the surrounding events such as a beer garden, driver autograph sessions, games, music, and refreshments.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: gpstpete.com

SPRING FAIR – Port Orange welcomes the warming weather with carnival rides, ponies, a BMX stunt show, a skate competition, bands, laser tag and a pet costume contest and parade. Arrive early and hit the business and craft expo booths or stay late and watch a movie under the stars.

Where: Port Orange

Web: familydays.com/spring-fair

THE WORLD'S LARGEST FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL EVER – “World’s largest” is a heady claim but the Guinness record books don’t lie. Tampa continues its tradition of drawing hundreds of food trucks to one location for a weekend, giving guests tasty options from Philly cheesesteaks to fried ice cream.

Where: Tampa

ST. PETE BEACH BEER FEST – Use your own commemorative tasting cup to sample more than 50 types of beer from all over Florida and other parts of the country while enjoying the beautiful beach setting. Keep your belly full with tacos, BBQ, and other festival foods, and finish it all off with a cigar, hand-rolled right in front of you.

Where: St. Pete Beach

Web: visitstpeteclearwater.com/beer-fest

BIKE WEEK – A Daytona Beach tradition for nearly 80 years, it’s the world’s most famous 10-day party for motorcycle enthusiasts and spring breakers, attracting bikers of all shapes, sizes, nationalities, and eccentricities. Roam the streets and find vintage cycle shows, rock music concerts, biker breakfasts and planned rides.

Where: Daytona Beach

Web: officialbikeweek.com

GASPARILLA MUSIC FESTIVAL – An all-star alternative and indie lineup is sure to bring tens of thousands of young and hip concertgoers to blend with fans of other genres like blues, gospel, bluegrass, country, and folk.

Where: Downtown Tampa

Web: gasparillamusicfestival.com

WILL MCLEAN MUSIC FESTIVAL – This homage to the “Florida Father of Folk” brings families, campers, musicians, and local historians to Hernando County, where they enjoy banjo and fiddle workshops, music by original songwriters, poetry, storytelling, Florida Cracker-style food, contests, and crafts.

Where: Sertoma Youth Ranch, Brooksville

Web: willmclean.com

NATIONAL CUBAN SANDWICH FESTIVAL – Miami and Tampa have been battling over who has the best and most authentic Cuban sandwich for decades. This festival aims to settle the debate – at least until the next year – with its annual three-day competition spotlighting sandwich makers from both regions, working their magic with pork, Swiss cheese, and whatever other secret ingredients the competitors slip between slices of fresh-baked Cuban bread.

Where: Historic Ybor City, Tampa

Web: thecubansandwichfestival.com

LAKERIDGE WINERY AND VINEYARDS WINE AND SEAFOOD FEST – As a perfect way to kick off Florida’s beautiful spring weather, Lakeridge Winery hosts its signature event featuring its own cuvee blanc, chardonnay, ports, and other types of wine, as well as beer, soft drinks, and a variety of seafood specialties. Complimentary tastings and tours are included.

Where: Clermont

Web: lakeridgewinery.com

THE PREGO EXPO – Expectant parents, new parents, and future parents (and grandparents) finally get their own expo event with educational seminars, safety tips, new product samples and more. New moms can visit a play area with their little ones and moms-to-be can get free 3D and 4D sonograms of their growing bumps.

Where: Orlando

Web: thepregoexpo.com

FLORIDA STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL – The Strawberry Capital of the World goes all out to honor its most prized fruit, serving it on shortcake, in milkshakes, by the container or by the flat. Plus, check out carnival rides, livestock shows, the fried candy bar truck and performances by nationally known headline artists.

Where: Plant City

Web: flstrawberryfestival.com

EPCOT INTERNATIONAL FLOWER & GARDEN FESTIVAL – For its special annual spring event, Epcot transforms into a maze of stunning flower and plant topiaries, outdoor kitchens with international food samples, home design presentations, a hippie-themed concert series and more. March through mid-May.

Where: Lake Buena Vista

Web: disneyworld.international-flower-and-garden-festival

APRIL EVENTS

The Tampa Bay Blues Festival

Every year since 1995, Vinoy Park, snuggled against the shores of Tampa Bay, has hosted some of the biggest names in Blues, including Buddy Guy, George Thorogood, and Jerry Lee Lewis. Touted as one of the world's finest blues music events, this festival boasts three days of music, a kick-off party and after parties, as well as food, beer, wine, mixed drinks, vendors, and arts and crafts.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: tampabaybluesfest.com

FUNK FEST – Combining old school and new school rhythm and blues, the long-running Funk Fest brings its tour through Orlando. Top national acts always appear at this this all-evening outdoor show that also has plenty of food and merchandise vendors.

Where: Central Florida Fairgrounds, Orlando

Web: funkfesttour.com

FLORIDA STORYTELLING FESTIVAL – Florida Story Association celebrates all things story in Mt. Dora. Highlights: Evening concerts under the Big Top Tent, workshops, Story Swaps, Story Slams, Fringe Stories and Front Porch Stories at the historic Lakeside Inn. There's even a Story Cruise on Lake Dora. Tellers have been bringing their best stories from all over the world for more than 30 years.

Where: Lakeside Inn in Mt. Dora

Web: flstory.com/

SUN 'N FUN INTERNATIONAL FLY-IN & EXPO – This weeklong celebration of aviation is packed with activities for the young and old, the cutting edge and nostalgic, the adrenaline junkies and the

picnic packers. Watch fighter jets soar and hot air balloons float after visiting entertaining and educational programs and expos.

Where: Lakeland

Web: www.sun-n-fun.org

TAMPA BAY BLUES FEST – One of Florida's most popular blues music events returns for the 20th year, set against the beautiful waterfront backdrop of Vinoy Park. This fest always attracts the America's top blues performers. Refreshments are plentiful, with seafood, barbeque, Cuban cuisine, beer, wine, and mixed drinks on the menu.

Where: Vinoy Park, St. Petersburg

Web: tampabaybluesfest.com

FIESTA IN THE PARK – Experience the beauty of springtime weather in the most scenic area of downtown Orlando, where patrons can gaze at oil paintings, portraits, metal sculptures, Indian arts and crafts and other wares for sale while enjoying live music and feeding the geese in the Lake Eola. Pets welcome!

Where: Lake Eola, downtown Orlando

Web: fiestainthepark.com

INDIAN RIVER FESTIVAL – This colorful and quaint festival is family-focused, with lots of interesting and fun activities for all ages including kite flying, kayaking, arts and crafts tents, food, music, an obstacle course and more.

Where: Sandpoint Park, Titusville

Web: nbdd.com/festivals

FLORIDA BLUEBERRY FESTIVAL – Playing second fiddle to the strawberry, the Florida blueberry is often the state's forgotten treat. But not at this annual festival, which features blueberry desserts, blueberry wines, blueberry vinegars and jams, as well as a beer garden, dog show, car show and a Blueberry Kids Zone.

Where: Brooksville

Web: floridablueberryfestival.org

FESTIVAL OF CHOCOLATE – This touring celebration spreads cocoa love among the chocoholic attendees with traditional and creative desserts, candies, and drinks. Small businesses show off their handmade products, pastry chefs and chocolatiers work their artistry and magic and chocolate advocacy groups (yes, these exist) educate guests on all that is wonderful about chocolate.

Where: Tampa

Web: festivalofchocolate.com

PIER 60 SUGAR SAND FESTIVAL – This beach-wide celebration pays tribute to Tampa Bay's two most valuable assets: sugar sands and sunsets. The showcase is a 21,000-square-foot structure that transforms into an art gallery of sand sculptures created by master sculptors from around the world.

Where: Pier 60, Clearwater Beach

Web: sugarsandfestival.com

BOOMTOWN DAYS – The small town of Dunnellon pays homage to its roots -- the discovery here of phosphate in the 1800s. Don't miss the Lil' Miss and Mr. Dunellon Pageant, which is the highlight event among other entertainment, crafts vendors and delicious BBQ and fair food tents.
Where: Historic Dunnellon
Web: ocalamarion.com

EASTER SURF FESTIVAL – This unusual combination of Easter and surfboards has something for everyone, particularly if you love Florida's east coast waves. Along with various levels of surfing and skim board competitions, there's an Easter egg hunt and a special sunrise service on the beach.
Where: Lori Wilson Park, Cocoa Beach
Web: eastersurffest.com

LEESBURG BIKEFEST – Unleash your wild side at this loud and raucous three-day event devoted to motorcycles, music, and gentle mayhem. Also included: Live music, a tattoo expo, a classic bike show, bikini contests and more.
Where: Leesburg
Web: leesburgbikefest.com

SIESTA FIESTA – Siesta Key Village blocks off its streets for a weekend to create the perfect springtime art show only blocks from the Gulf of Mexico and its delightful breeze. Admire or buy paintings, glass art, metalwork, jewelry, sculptures, and photography, or check out the live bands and nearby shops.
Where: Siesta Village, Siesta Key
Web: escape-to-sarasota.com

FESTA ITALIANA – It kicks off with a wine party featuring more than 70 wines, as well as Italian antipasti, cuisine, and desserts. It ends with the main event, during which dozens of the Tampa Bay area's top restaurants and catering companies serve delicious dishes and tastings.
Where: Historic Ybor City, Tampa
Web: festaitalianatampa.com

CENTRAL FLORIDA EARTH DAY– Learn about Florida's endangered species, sample some vegan foods, do some Tahitian dance moves, buy some plants, and paint a "paper bag mushroom" at Central Florida's longest-running Earth Day celebration.
Where: Lake Eola Park, Orlando
Web: cfearthday.org

MAY EVENTS

CLEARWATER BEACH RESTAURANT WEEK – It's actually two weeks long and gives you the chance to sample some of the area's top-notch dining or casual fare, all its super low prices. It all begins with a kick-off party that features beer and wine tastings, music, and fireworks.
Where: Various restaurants in Clearwater Beach
Web: clearwaterbeachrestaurantweek.com

FOOD AND WINE ON PINE – Top chefs and culinary students from around the region prepare their best dishes, from lobster and shrimp ceviche to gourmet tater tots to frozen wine slushies, as

guests watch chalk demonstrations and sip Kentucky Derby drink specials along Anna Maria's Pine Avenue.

Where: Along Pine Avenue in Anna Maria

FISHSTOCK – Thousands of fishing enthusiasts flock to the fish-filled waters of New Smyrna to show off their skills in various events, including the Redfish-Trout Challenge and the Striker Offshore Tournament. Children can learn to fish in the Kidstock seminars, and there's a boat show and a 5k for those on the sidelines.

Where: New Smyrna Beach

Web: fishstock.com

BIG GUAVA MUSIC FESTIVAL – Some of the most popular names in alternative, rock, indie and hip-hop are always on hand to make this one of Florida's best music festivals of the year.

Where: Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa

Web: bigguavafest.com

SCOTT'S ZELLWOOD SWEET CORN JAMBOREE – Long & Scott Farms is a one-of-a-kind, authentic farm and market, complete with a seven-acre maze and country store. Spend a day listening to music, taking your kids to the on-site playground, checking out various crafts vendors, and of course, trying the delicious Florida sweet corn.

Where: Mt. Dora

ORANGE BLOSSOM JAMBOREE – Dozens of Florida bands, ranging from funk to country to hard rock, jam in this four-day event held on a sprawling campsite. Spend a day or roll up in your RV and spend the whole long weekend listening to original and cover tunes and eating BBQ, vegan dishes, and other concessions.

Where: Sertoma Ranch, Brooksville

Web: orangeblossomjamboree.com

NEW SMYRNA BEACH BLUES FESTIVAL – Relax and get into the summer spirit at this annual and much-anticipated blues fest, which draws music fans from all over Florida to the streets of New Smyrna, where talented musicians entertain at various bars and stages throughout the town.

Where: New Smyrna Beach

Web: nsbfla.com/bluesfest

ORLANDO INTERNATIONAL FRINGE THEATER FESTIVAL – This 14-day arts festival offers theatre, music, dance performances and artists of all genres. Kids Fringe for children and families features entertaining performances by Fringe artists, workshops, hands-on art activities.

Where: Orlando

Web: orlandofringe.org

SUNSCREEN FILM FESTIVAL – About 90 full-length films and shorts, including narratives, documentaries, foreign films, Spanish-language films, and animated works are featured. Attend workshops to help hone your own filmmaking skills.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: sunscreenfilmfestival.com

ST. JOHNS RIVER FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS – More than 125 regionally and nationally accredited fine artists and craftsmen line the charming brick streets of downtown Sanford, bringing paintings, pottery, sculpture, woodworking, photography, jewelry, blown glass and more. Enjoy hand crafted food at the Culinary Arts Court and see live artist demonstrations.

Where: Historic Downtown Sanford

Web: stjohnsriverartfest.com

CENTRAL FLORIDA'S BBQ BLOWOUT – One of the state's biggest BBQ events of the year, the Blowout brings 80 professional and backyard teams grilling and smoking their hearts out to compete for cash, trophies, and a chance to go on to the World Food Championships in Vegas.

Where: Oveido

Web: bbqblowout.org

TROPICAL HEATWAVE – Eclectic local bands share stages with national acts in this long-running Tampa Bay area music event hosted by community radio.

Where: Ybor City, Tampa

Web: tropicalheatwave.org

FOOD AND WINE ON PINE – Try delicious dishes from local restaurants, pair them with fine wines and craft beer, and dance along to the live rock, blues, and jazz bands.

Where: Pine Avenue, Anna Maria

Web: foodandwindonpine.com

COUNTRY 500 – Top country music acts rock Daytona on Memorial Day weekend as racing's greatest venue turns into a festival-goer's dream for three days and nights. Check out the artist meet-and-greets located throughout pit road and the garages.

Where: Daytona International Speedway, Daytona Beach

Web: country500.com

JUNE EVENTS

ST. PETE PRIDE

This humongous festival draws around 100,000 marchers to the parade in downtown St. Petersburg's Historic Grand Central District, as well as hundreds of thousands of visitors enjoying the area's clubs and beaches. As an added bonus this year, the parade has been moved to nighttime rather than its usual mid-day launch, giving attendees a relief from the heat and giving visitors more time to relax at BBQs, tailgates, and parties during the day.

Where: St Petersburg

TAMPA BAY CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL

Steeped in tradition, this colorful event showcases the vibrant Caribbean-American cultures. It includes a J'ouvert morning experience (J'ouvert means daybreak or morning, and marks the start of the Carnival) as well as exhibits, crafts, top-name entertainment, vendors, a street parade, a Steelpan Jamboree, carnival music, and high-stepping masquerade bands.

Where: St Petersburg

Web: carnivaltampa.com

ST. ARMANDS CIRCLE AND DOWNTOWN VENICE CRAFT FESTIVALS: Peruse booths filled with painting, crafts, stained glass, pottery, jewelry, photography, personalized products for kids and pooches and much more, including a Green Market for plants, handmade soaps, tangy BBQ sauces and gorgeous orchids.

Where: St. Armands Circle on St. Armands Key just off the coast of Sarasota; Miami Avenue in Venice

Web: artfestival.com

SUMMERLAND CONCERT TOUR: If the 1990s was your decade, this one's for you. This annual event features the best acts that were popular in that decade.

Where: Top Rocker Field, Fort Myers

Web: SixBends.com

SARASOTA SUP CHAMPIONSHIPS – Paddleboard enthusiasts, competitors and newbies hit one of the world's best beaches to watch various elite, juniors, sprint, and distance events on the water. Demos for kids and adults help even the paddle-weary learn to enjoy this accessible and popular sport.

Where: Siesta Key Beach

Web: sarasotasupchampionships.com/

SARASOTA MUSIC FESTIVAL – Hundreds of music students from some of the top programs in the world attend this three-week festival to showcase their talent and learn new skills. Festival audiences are invited to any of the concerts or lectures, including the Thursday afternoon Artist Showcase concerts, Friday Festival chamber concerts, and Saturday Symphony orchestra concerts.

Where: Sarasota

Web: sarasotaorchestra.org/festival

MAIN STREET BLAST – For those who can't wait until July 4 to get the party started, New Port Richey's KIAFEST Main Street Blast early Independence Day celebration includes all the holiday highlights: fair food, a Miss Firecracker contest, live music and, of course, fireworks.

Where: Downtown New Port Richey

Web: nprmainstreet.com

TAMPA BAY CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL– Festive music, loud colors and fiery foods take over St. Petersburg's Albert Whitted Park while a colorful street parade honors the Caribbean culture. Great live music, too.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: carnivaltampa.com

ONE MAGICAL WEEKEND – One of the world's biggest LGBT weekend events returns to the Walt Disney World resorts, bringing an exciting lineup of pool parties, film viewings, Epcot drink-around-the-world shenanigans and other fun times.

Where: Lake Buena Vista

Web: onemagicalweekend.com

ST. PETE PRIDE – One of the southeast United States' largest LGBT pride celebrations features artists, musicians, fashion designers, community leaders, business owners and activists. The grand finale is the evening night parade and family- and pet-friendly street festival on the last weekend of Pride.

Where: St. Petersburg
Web: stpetepride.com

SILVER SPURS RODEO – More than 70 years old, this classic Central Florida rodeo is still going strong, drawing the best bull riders, barrel racers and ropers to the Silver Spurs Arena. The event kicks off with the glitzy Miss Silver Spurs pageant and has various kids' activities and interesting vendors to visit during rodeo breaks.

Where: Osceola Heritage Park, Kissimmee
Web: silverspursrodeo.com

POLKA DOT FLEA – As cute as it sounds, the annual Polka Dot Flea is filled with cool vintage items and wares, more like a Paris street market than a junkyard of overstock items. Treasure hunters delight in one-of-a-kind finds for their home and garden, as well as unique items of clothing, funky antique jewelry, repurposed bikes, furniture and more.

Where: Central Florida Fairgrounds, Orlando
Web: polkadotflea.com

REPTICON – This long-running annual features tub-loads of slithery, cold-blooded creatures for petting, handling, photographing, purchasing, or watching in one of the many educational lecture events devoted to snakes, geckos, iguanas, toads, turtles and more.

Where: Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa
Web: repticon.com

THE BEER PROJECT – St. Petersburg's Museum of Fine Arts teams up with the homegrown Green Bench Brewing to present this well-meshed combo of arts and craft beer. Cast your vote in a homebrewed beer competition and taste local breweries' special beers inspired by selected works in the Museum's collection.

Where: St. Petersburg
Web: fine-arts.org/beer-project

JULY EVENTS

SARASOTA IMPROV FESTIVAL – Comedy troupes from all over the country – and some from overseas – bring three days of laughs and performances, including all-female acts, musicals, audience interactive plays and other entertaining displays of off-the-cuff talent. Participants can also buy tickets to workshops and seminars.

Where: Florida Studio Theatre, Sarasota
Web: floridastudiotheatre.org

THUNDER ON THE RIDGE – This annual event sets Polk County a-glow with the area's largest July 4th fireworks display, including a Guinness World Record number of sparklers lit at once. General admission is free and includes live music, children's activities, games, arts & crafts vendors, a beer garden, and food concessions.

Where: Haines City
Web: visitcentralflorida.org

SHARKCON – Shark! Ease your fears of these saw-toothed beasts by learning more about their fascinating history, psychology, physiology, habits, and pop culture significance at the returning

SharkCon, a weekend of education and interactive fun honoring the ocean. See displays featuring touch tanks, paddleboard lessons and even mermaids.

Where: Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa

Web: shark-con.com

FIREWORKS AT THE FOUNTAIN – The Orlando Concert Band entertains the July 4th crowd with patriotic favorites while families enjoy a kids' activity area with basketball, tennis and more. Grab some BBQ and drinks before settling near the lake to watch a dazzling nighttime fireworks display.

Where: Lake Eola Park, Orlando

Web: cityoforlando.net/fireworks

COOL ART SHOW – This popular, free indoor (read: air-conditioned!) art show fills the St. Petersburg Coliseum with ceramics, jewelry, photography, paintings, sculpture, and multimedia works. Food and drinks, including beer and wine, are also on the menu.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: pava-artists.org

MAJOR BEACH SOCCER – More than 100 teams and thousands of spectators flood the white sands of Clearwater Beach to take part in this serious beach soccer competition series. It's a fun break from the usual beach sports of volleyball and Frisbee and one of five qualifying tournaments leading up to the December national championships.

Where: Clearwater Beach

Web: majorbeachsoccer.com/clearwater-beach

A SCI-FI FOURTH OF JULY – Dress up as your favorite sci-fi movie character and hit the streets of Celebration for this quirky, upbeat Independence Day party. Live music provided by colorful bands, artists and artists will lead up to a spectacular firework display set to a sci-fi soundtrack.

Where: Downtown Celebration

Web: celebrationtowncenter.com

TASTE OF THE BEACHES – Sample seafood, desserts, hot sauces, jams, ice cream, ethnic cuisine and more from local favorite restaurants and caterers serving the beach foodie scene. Buy a \$25 drink wristband and taste unlimited beer and wine, too.

Where: Madeira Beach

VANS WARPED TOUR – Music fans from all over the state flood the waterfront Vinoy Park to see some of the world's most popular alternative rock bands. Cool off at the misting station and slip n' slide if you don't mind getting wet.

Where: Vinoy Park, St. Petersburg

Web: vanswarpedtour.com

DUNEDIN ORANGE FESTIVAL – In a town known for its history of oranges, orange groves and citrus packing, this festival became a natural fit in 2010 and has been held every July in Edgewater Park since. Sample some contest entries in the local restaurant Mojo Cook-Off Contest, or try some fruity ice cream, smoothies, and juice blends.

Where: Dunedin

AUGUST EVENTS

GAY DAYS

What began in 1991 as an unofficial weekend where LGBT visitors show up at Disney World and wear red has blossomed into one of the world's most popular and well-known weekends for gay and lesbian tourist. "We were voted the number one global destination in 2013, which we're excited about," said Chris Alexander-Manley, President of Gay Days, Inc. "It helps that we're in one of the top tourist destinations in the world." The weekend's appeal spans all ages and applies to all of Orlando's theme parks.

Where: Orlando

SARASOTA SLAM – Fishing amateurs beware! This is a fiercely competitive tournament for skilled inshore and offshore anglers yielding impressive results snapper, trout, and other tough catches to weigh in and compete for money prizes. There's a category for Jr. Anglers and a dockside BBQ and party for competitors and guests.

Where: Marina Jack, Sarasota

Web: sarasotaslamm.com

NIGHT IN THE TROPICS – Feel like you're in Key West without driving hours south by hitting the heart of downtown New Port Richey and partying with the parrot-heads. The all-night-long street party includes Latin-style food and music, tropical and exotic birds, dancing, street performers, a classic car cruise-in and a tropical beer garden.

Where: Historic downtown New Port Richey

HARVEST GRAPE STOMP – Fun for kids and even more fun for adults over 21, Lakeridge Winery's annual grape stomp is a great late-summer event that invites families to feel the squish of grape skins between their toes while being serenaded by local musicians and tasting a variety of wine and beer. Soft drinks are also on-hand for the kiddos, as well as food for purchase.

Where: Lakeridge Winery & Vineyards, Clermont

Web: lakeridgewinery.com

SUMMER OF RUM FEST – What better way to stay cool in the Florida summer heat than with a sampling of various rum punches, rum runners, rum coladas, rum mojitos and more rum. Patrons have the option of partying outdoors for a true tropical experience or cooling off indoors, with music and dancing throughout.

Where: The Cuban Club, Ybor City (Tampa)

Web: summerofrumfest.com

ORLANDO GIFT SHOW – Get your holiday shopping done early at this popular expo and trade show where home-shopping fanatics, collectors and other curious buyers can sift through a wide selection of vendors selling decorative accessories, aromatherapy, greeting cards, paper goods, tabletop, resort and tourist merchandise, logo products, fashion accessories, toys, games, gourmet products, jewelry and even gift cards for those who can't decide.

Where: Orange County Convention Center, Orlando

Web: orlandogiftshow.com

INDIAFEST OF MANASOTA – The Gujarati Association of Manasota and the Indian American Association team up to raise awareness and appreciation of the culture, traditional dance, food,

handmade merchandise, and historical presentations highlighting Indian life and the spirit of India.

Where: Bradenton Area Convention Center, Palmetto

Web: manasotaindiafest.com

FLORIDA KIDS & FAMILY EXPO – All types of family-focused exhibitors – from playground-makers to Girl Scouts to petting farms – gather to display their goods and provide interactive fun for kids of all ages and their parents. Teens can learn makeup techniques, kids can play laser tag and parents can learn more about party planning, daycare, and other innovative offerings. Bonus: It's all indoors and air-conditioned.

Where: Orange County Convention Center, Orlando

Web: mycentralfloridafamily.com

GULFPORT GECKO CRAWL – The little town of Gulfport signifies the end of summer and kicks off its signature GeckoFest with its annual Gecko Crawl, a six-bar pub crawl and street festival that ends at the local favorite, O'Maddy's.

Where: Historic Waterfront District, Gulfport

Web: geckofest.com

TAMPA BAY COMIC CON – Geek out at one of the Tampa Bay area's most well-known and long-running "cons," filled with everything you'd expect at weekend devoted to comic book junkies: cosplay, celebrity guests, toys and graphic novels, an electronic gaming arena and a "game cave" with tabletop and board games, foam sword fighting, a kid play zone and more.

Where: Tampa Convention Center, Downtown Tampa

Web: tampabaycomiccon.com

WAZOO – Named one of the "10 Great Beer Festivals in the Country" by USA Today, this annual tasting event features 275 beers and beverages from around the world, tasty food samplings from favorite Tampa Bay area restaurants and live music throughout the Zoo.

Where: ZooTampa at Lowry Park

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

COME OUT WITH PRIDE

An entertaining and exciting event for both LGBT and non-LGBT visitors alike, Come Out With Pride – also known as Orlando Pride – takes over downtown and other areas for a week. With big-name sponsors such as Macy's and Universal Studios, the parade and its colorful costumes and elaborate floats is something to behold, and the fireworks show is one of the best you'll see outside of July 4th.

Where: Orlando

TOM JOYNER FAMILY REUNION

This Expo is huge, free, and family-friendly – what's not to like? Its concerts, games, star-studded performances, seminars, fitness, celebrity appearances and autograph signings are sure to keep your whole gang smiling.

Where: Orlando

Web: blackamericaweb.com/category/tom-joyner-family-reunion

SHINE MURAL FESTIVAL – More than a dozen local and national mural artists put their work on display on downtown building walls and inside galleries throughout St. Petersburg’s funky, growing arts district. Watch art students take part in a community mural project outside of a bar along Central Avenue or take one of the trolley or walking tours.

Where: Downtown St. Petersburg

Web: shineonstpete.com

TAMPA THEATRE WINEFEST – At a beloved and historic old theater holds its biggest fundraiser, patrons are encouraged to come dressed as their favorite character based on the yearly theme. Also: sample fare from some of the area’s best independent restaurants and rare, top-rated wines from around the world.

Where: Tampa Theatre, downtown Tampa

Web: tampatheatre.org/WineFest

HOWL-O-SCREAM FREAKY PREVIEW – Dare to be among the first guests – or victims – at Busch Gardens’ annual haunted freak show opening weekend. Expect lots of terrifying surprises and pop-ups as you encounter roaming creatures, scare zones and interactive entertainment, as well as navigating some of Florida’s top thrill rides in the dark.

Where: Busch Gardens, Tampa

Web: seaworldparks.com

PIONEER DAYS – The long-running, two-week celebration wraps up with the Annual Pioneer Days Parade on Labor Day morning. But before that, enjoy a weekend packed with family-friendly activities such as cardboard boat races, a photo contest, a car show, a fish-a-thon, a chalk art festival, “Englewood’s Got Talent” and more.

Where: Englewood

Web: englewoodpioneerdays.com

FESTIVAL OF FLIGHT – Take a ride on a helicopter, float through the air on a hot-air balloon, co-pilot a plane or just sit back and watch the beauty of colorful flying objects, including deltas, trikes, and kites. This festival brings together the pilot and aviation community with Florida families.

Where: Wesley Chapel

Web: festivalofflightwesleychapel.com

TASTE OF THE FIELDS – Just as the early fall temperatures begin to drop, enjoy an evening of “country elegant” outdoor dining with a multi-course plated meal, served family-style, made from food grown on Hernando County soil. Then relax and enjoy live music, wine tasting, a corn maze, and other fun grown-up activities.

Where: Lakeside Ranch, Brooksville

Web: kiwanisofthebrooksvillerridge.com

GECKOFEST – A month of gecko-themed fundraiser events finishes with the well-attended, daylong Geckofest, which takes over the waterfront streets of quirky Gulfport with residents and visitors dressed up as the reptiles. The day consists of a walking parade, a costume contest, street performers, food vendors, two musical stages and arts and crafts tents.

Where: Downtown Gulfport

Web: geckofest.com

ART IN ODD PLACES ORLANDO – This inaugural event is exactly what it sounds like: the discovery of unusual and fun works of art in places you would never expect to find them. Check out performances and installation pieces from more than 60 artists along the entire stretch of Orlando's 14th Street, from FDR Drive to the High Line.

Where: Downtown Orlando

Web: artinoddplaces.org/orlando

FLAVOR RUN 5K – Engage all the senses while getting a good workout at this unusual and hilarious 5K run/walk/stroll event, similar to a "color run" except tastier. Entrants make their way toward the finish line while being doused with brightly colored powder that tastes like blueberry, strawberry, orange, banana, watermelon, and grape.

Where: Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa

Web: flavorrun.com/tampa

ST. PETE OKTOBERFEST – Celebrate Oktoberfest St. Pete-style with an afternoon and evening of costume, yodeling and stein-holding contests, knockwurst, and homemade kraut, specially brewed beers, kid-friendly activities and a lineup of some of the area's favorite bands and solo artists.

Where: Grand Central District, St. Petersburg

Web: stpeteoktoberfest.com

ROCK THE UNIVERSE – Florida's largest Christian music festival returns to Universal Studios, where some of the country's best Christian rock and worship music bands and inspirational speakers entertain a large turnout of enthusiastic fans. Guests can also join in a moving Candle Lighting Ceremony and a special Sunday Morning Worship Service.

Where: Universal Studios, Orlando

Web: universalorlando.com/Rock-The-Universe

I LIKE IT HOT! FESTIVAL – If you like it hot – we're talking mouth-burning, tear-jerking, forehead-sweating spicy – you'll likely meet your match at this annual event. The toughest of palates, as well as those who like it considerably milder, can try hundreds of gourmet and novelty foods, including beef jerky, sauces, salsas, jellies, rubs, lollipops, and straight-up raw hot peppers.

Where: Minnreg Hall, Largo

Web: ilikeithotfestival.com

AFT, CRAFT & WINE FESTIVAL – More than 150 artists and craftsmen sell original artwork and gifts in beautiful Cranes Roost Park. Guests can also stop by the various wine tents and taste a wide variety of reds, whites, champagnes, and roses as a part of the event's Wine Stroll.

Where: Crane Roost Park, Altamonte Springs

Web: aacwf.com

FOOD TRUCK WARS – Come very hungry and pace yourself at Winter Haven's Food Truck Wars, where patrons can vote for their favorite dishes among 40 trucks. The offerings include gelato, doughnuts, kabobs, pizza, lobster rolls, tacos, chowders, hummus and more.

Where: Central Park in downtown Winter Haven

Web: foodtruckwars.com

OCTOBER EVENTS

TAMPA GAY AND LESBIAN FILM FEST

The Tampa Bay Business Guild, the Bay Area Human Rights Coalition, and the Tampa Bay Gay Men's Chorus come together to host this film festival, screened at the historic Tampa Theatre. While a few parties and galas surround the event, it is centered mainly on film and the arts, attracting a more cerebral crowd.

Where: Tampa

SARASOTA PUMPKIN FESTIVAL – Orange is the new Sarasota, as the city hosts its all-things pumpkin weekend. Features include: pumpkin patch, pumpkin maze, carnival rides, pie-eating contests, hayrides, 100 live shows, kids' zone, Live Ninja Turtle show, pony rides, petting zoo, circus, and a tricky-dog show.

Where: Payne Park, downtown Sarasota

THE NEON VIBE 5K – The perfect pre-Halloween race event is eerily lit with glow-in-the-dark beads, glow sticks and bodies splashed with neon colors. While a DJ pumps techno and dance music, runners and walkers will pass through "glow zones" and cool down at the "aftervibe celebration" at the end.

Where: Premier Sports Campus, Lakewood Ranch

Web: theneonvibe.com/sarasota

15 MINUTES OF FAME FILM FESTIVAL – This free, no-frills film festival is for those who truly love movies -- especially very short movies. Get the chance to screen a colorful variety of documentaries, music videos, animation, narratives, and other creative forms of film, each running no longer than 15 minutes.

Where: International Palms Resort and Conference Center, Orlando

Web: 15minutefilmfest.com

CENTRAL FLORIDA VEG FEST – This vegetarian festival touts itself as one of the biggest and best in the country, drawing hundreds of food and product vendors and presenters from around the world. Bring your dog, pet a pig, take a yoga class and sample creative and delicious vegetarian and vegan dishes.

Where: Orlando Festival Park, Orlando

Web: cfvegfest.org

ZOOBOO KIDS – For the little trick-or-treaters too young to enjoy gory zombies and haunted mansions, Lowry Park created a new "fright-free" Halloween event for kids ages 3-11. Think adorable costumes, critters, corn mazes and characters that will make for great photo ops and create nice memories rather than nightmares.

Where: Lowry Park Zoo, Tampa

GREAT AMERICAN COOTER FEST– Inverness' most famous – or at least famously named – festival returns with music, dancing, food trucks, boat races and more. Check out the impressive costume contest and sample a treat from a cupcake bake-off, all in the name of a mythical turtle named Cooter.

Where: Liberty Park, Inverness

Web: www.cooterfestival.com

OKTOBERFEST TAMPA – Get into the spirit with this Deutsch-themed, three-day party, complete with frothy beer, lederhosen, accordion music, and other shenanigans. Vendors will be serving up currywurst, warm pretzels and German baked goods. Guests can participate in the stein hoisting, keg stack, “carry the wench” and other games.

Where: Curtis Hixon Park, downtown Tampa

Web: oktoberfesttampa.com

THE FESTIVAL – Also known as the Shelton Brothers Festival, this roving event will visit St. Petersburg and its thriving craft beer scene, introducing around 90 local, national, and international artisanal beer, cider, and mead makers through tastings and workshops.

Web: sheltonbrothers.com

ART & ALGORITHMS – Science nerds and visual artists join forces in this free, walkable festival that piques the senses with interactive artwork, an iPad lab, international short film screenings, digital gaming, virtual reality exhibits and other cool and entertaining displays.

Where: Downtown Titusville

Web: artandalgorithms.com

MOUNT DORA BICYCLE FESTIVAL– Cyclists from all over the world love this three-day weekend of multiple routes along gorgeous Mount Dora, ranging from a friendly ghost ride to crushing hill climbs, as well as pre-ride breakfasts, a beer garden, and other activities.

Where: Mount Dora

Web: mountdorabicyclefestival.com

LAKELAND ZOMBIE FEST – Experience the closest thing to a zombie apocalypse you can imagine as tens of thousands of bloody, ashen-faced, hollow-eyed zombie wannabes slither through the streets of Lakeland. Kids can hit the “safe zone” if they’re not fans of walking dead people, and food vendors and dance and costume competitions lighten the mood.

Where: Sun n Fun Convention Campus, Lakeland

Web: lakelandzombiefest.com

BRICK-OR-TREAT – LEGOLAND has expanded its annual celebration so that more can enjoy the building activities, scavenger hunts, the world’s largest LEGO jack-o-lantern and a nightly Halloween-themed firework show.

Where: LEGOLAND, Winter Haven

Web: legoland.com

OCALA ARTS FESTIVAL – Art lovers and collectors fill the streets of historic downtown Ocala for this juried fine arts show with 155 artists and craftsmen from all over the country. Kids can also enjoy activity stations and entertainment and holiday shoppers can get an early start at the crafts and gifts tents.

Where: Downtown Ocala

Web: fafo.org

CLEARWATER JAZZ HOLIDAY – This international music fest has drawn acts such as Dizzy Gillespie, Tony Bennett, and Branford Marsalis.

Where: Coachman Park, Clearwater
Web: clearwaterjazz.com

NOVEMBER EVENTS

SAND ART TRIO – Not one, not two, but count 'em, three this year! You can't go wrong with any of them: the Annual American Sand Sculpting Championship and Beach Festival on Fort Myers Beach, the International Sand Art Competition in Key West, and the Annual Siesta Key Crystal Classic International Sand Sculpting Festival on Siesta Key near Sarasota. No matter which one you attend, you will be awed by the amazing out-of-sand creations.

Where: Siesta Key

Web: Respectively, fmbsandsculpting.com, sandisle.com and SiestaKeyCrystalClassic.com

SARASOTA CHALK FESTIVAL – Hundreds of artists use the pavement as their canvas and pastel chalk as their medium to create breathtaking oversized traditional 3D illusionistic paintings. You're invited to participate in, attend and interact with the artists as they go about their work. There's a different theme each year.

Where: Downtown Venice and the Venice Airport Fairgrounds

Web: chalkfestival.org

MEDIEVAL MANIA – It's east coast versus west coast, with Camelot Days Medieval Festival on the former and the Sarasota Medieval Fair on the latter. Either one will take you back to days of yore, with living chess games, jousting competitions, battling knights, jesters, jugglers, birds of prey and lots of good grub and grog.

Where: Respectively, T. Y. Park in Hollywood and Ringling Woods behind the Sarasota Fairgrounds.

Web: Respectively, camelotdays.com and sarasotamedievalfair.com

"CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR!" HOLIDAY HOME TOUR - Elaborate, elegant, over-the-top designer Christmas decorations in one of Florida's most historic mansions. The 1886 "Gilded Age" Victorian Stetson Mansion has been recently been listed as one of the "Top 10 Things to do in Florida" by Tripadvisor. Reservations required.

Where: Stetson Mansion, 1031 Camphor Ln, DeLand, FL 32720

Web: stetsonmansion.com/

THE FANCY FLEA – Rather than the usual hodgepodge of items found at traditional markets, this is a different kind of flea market, targeted toward the Southern belles with upscale tastes. The outdoor vintage show offers shabby chic décor, furniture, antiques, garden and patio accessories and artwork.

Where: Strawberry Festival Fairgrounds, Plant City

Web: fancyflea.net

VOLUSIA COUNTY FAIR & YOUTH SHOW – Local kids showcase their livestock and talents in art, photography, music, and craft projects while families enjoy fair rides, food, live music, and interesting exhibits for all ages.

Where: Volusia County Fair & Expo Center, Deland

Web: volusiacountyfair.com

ZOOFARI – More than 50 local restaurants serve up their best dishes and recipes at this popular zoo fundraiser, where participants enjoy an open bar, live music, and dancing.

Where: Lowry Park Zoo, Tampa

Web: lowryparkzoo.org/zoofari

STONE CRAB JAM – Shrimp, fish, and, of course, stone crab, are the cornerstone of the feast served at this rotary club festival and fundraiser, which also features vendors selling handmade wood furniture, embroidered clothing and other crafts and gifts.

Where: Crystal River

Web: kingsbayrotary.org/stone_crab_jam

MOUNT DORA PLANT & GARDEN FAIR – Experienced gardeners love finding obscure and unique plants and flower; beginning gardeners learn heaps of great info at this colorful fall fair. Shop for anything, including water lilies, olive trees, raw honey, and hand-painted pots.

Where: Downtown Mount Dora

Web: mountdoraplantandgardenfair.org

RIBFEST – For more than 26 years, people have been flocking to the smoky aroma of this yummy fest, where various “ribbers” from around the U.S. compete for top prize. Plus, hot dogs, funnel cakes, Texas fries and other fun foods. The event also draws big musical names.

Where: Vinoy Park, St. Petersburg

Web: ribfest.org

WHEN PIGS FLY SOUTH BBQ CHALLENGE – Billed as the “largest fly-in BBQ in the South,” this fair combines aviation with smoked meats, beer, and bands for a fun combination that’s family friendly and free. Stick around for the impressive Warbird fly-in.

Where: SUN ‘n FUN Convention Campus, Lakeland

HOMOSASSA ARTS, CRAFTS AND SEAFOOD FESTIVAL – Set in one of Florida’s best fishing towns, this fest draws artists from all over the country, including painters, sculptors, photographers, and jewelers. Sample some Sunshine State specialties such as gator tail and conch fritters.

Where: Historic Old Homosassa

Web: homosassaseafoodfestival.org

ART CRAWL – Thrifty art collectors and shoppers looking for holiday gifts will love this juried art show, which features emerging and established artists selling affordable artwork, much of which will be offered for \$500 or less. Those just looking can enjoy the live music and demonstrations.

Where: Polk Museum of Art, Lakeland

Web: downtownlakelandfl.com/art-crawl

MIXON FRUIT FARMS HARVEST FESTIVAL – Mixon Fruit Farms, one of the state’s most well-known citrus farms and country stores, holds this fall weekend of circus acts, antique cars, kid-friendly games, bungee jumping, rock wall climbing and food.

Where: Bradenton

Web: mixon.com/harvestfestival

CONGA CALIENTE – Tampa celebrates Hispanic culture and heritage with live national acts that have included Tito Nieves and Viva Mas in the past. Taste traditional Latin dishes, smoke a Cuban

cigar, and visit the beer garden or one of the many educational or health displays or the arts and crafts tents.

Where: Al Lopez Park, Tampa

Web: congacaliente.com

DECEMBER EVENTS

SANTA SPEEDO RUN TAMPA BAY -

Joining this light-hearted, Christmas-themed run at Centennial Park is a good excuse to check out Ybor City's holiday decorations, courtesy of the GaYBOR District, which began gaining ground years ago and helped shape the area's business and nightclub scene. Proceeds from the run benefit Brighter Seasons for Children and AIDS Service Association of Pinellas, which serves the Tampa Bay region.

Where: Tampa-Ybor City

LET THERE BE LIGHTS! – Millions and millions of them will light up the South Florida holiday skies and here's where to see some of the best and the brightest: Santa's Enchanted Forest at Tropical Park in Miami; Holiday Nights at the Edison & Ford Winter Estates in Fort Myers; Festival of Lights at Fisherman's Village in Punta Gorda, and Symphony of Lights at the Village of Gulfstream Park in Hallandale.

Web: santasenchantedforest.com, edisonfordwinterestates.org, fishville.com and thevillageatgulfstreampark.com

SNOW FEST SARASOTA – Daily "snowfall" covers the park in soft, white snow while families play on giant slides, build snowmen and take photos on Santa's lap. The three-day event also offers pony rides, hula hoopers, jugglers, DJs, and other holiday entertainment.

Where: Payne Park, downtown Sarasota

ATOMIC HOLIDAY BAZAAR – Continuing its decade-long tradition of bringing weird, wild, and uniquely local goods and gifts together in one place, this bazaar market returns with an array of jangly handmade jewelry, unconventionally shaped cookie cutters, cheeky postcards and paper goods, pop art handbags and T-shirts, one-of-a-kind stuffed animals, skull-themed scarves and more.

Where: Municipal Auditorium, Sarasota

Web: atomicholidaybazaar.com

"CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR!" HOLIDAY HOME TOUR - Elaborate, elegant, over-the-top designer Christmas decorations in one of Florida's most historic mansions. The 1886 "Gilded Age" Victorian Stetson Mansion has been recently been listed as one of the "Top 10 Things to do in Florida" by Tripadvisor. Reservations required.

Where: Stetson Mansion, 1031 Camphor Ln, DeLand, FL 32720

Web: stetsonmansion.com/

GLITTER GLISTEN AND SNOW – Take part in the novelty of Haines City's annual break from the warm and sunny holiday season by enjoying roasted chestnuts, hot cider and cocoa, Santa Claus appearances and luminary lightings. Bring your earmuffs and mittens to play in the falling snow.

Where: Lake Eva Park, Haines City

Web: visitcentralflorida.org

BUSCH GARDENS CHRISTMAS TOWN – Tampa’s safari-themed park transforms into a winter wonderland of Christmas shows, music, a Jingle Bell Express train ride for kids, Santa’s workshop and more than a million twinkling lights.

Where: Busch Gardens, Tampa

Web: seaworldparks.com/christmastown

PINELLAS PIONEER SETTLEMENT CHRISTMAS JAMBOREE – Experience old-fashioned Victorian holiday festivities at this historic settlement near Boyd Hill Nature Preserve. Take a tour of the living museum and late 1800s buildings, homes, and shops, then enjoy the music, craft shows, hayrides with Santa and shopping.

Where: St. Petersburg

Web: pinellaspioneersettlement.org

CHRISTMAS BRICKTACULAR – Think you’re a LEGO builder extraordinaire? Check out this impressive display that includes a 30-foot Christmas tree made of 270,000 tiny plastic bricks, a life-size Santa, and reindeer sleigh. Kids can make their own structures in an activity area and can participate in a LEGO scavenger hunt.

Where: LEGOLAND Florida, Winter Haven

Web: legoland.com/bricktacular

WINE & CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL – Pair robust reds and creamy whites with fine chocolate at this annual Lakeridge Winery tasting. Artists and crafters display their wares, local bands entertain, and vendors serve wine, beer, soft drinks, and food.

Where: Lakeridge Winery, Clermont

Web: lakeridgewinery.com

BRADENTON BLUES FESTIVAL – Local and national blues acts entertain along Bradenton’s waterfront all day, filling the streets with music while thousands of visitors peruse the food trucks, local vendors, and nearby bars.

Where: Riverwalk, downtown Bradenton

Web: bradentonbluesfestival.org

97X NEXT BIG THING – This popular alternative rock concert returns year after year with some of the hottest acts on the scene. Concertgoers can play games, enter contests, and visit food and drink tents in between acts.

Where: MIDFLORIDA Credit Union Amphitheatre, Tampa

Web: 97xonline.com

WINTERFEST FESTIVAL OF FINE ARTS & CRAFTS – Beautiful Anna Maria Island hosts a juried arts and crafts show filled with original paintings, glass, jewelry, pottery, sculpture, fiber arts, photography, wood, and other works. Patrons can spend all day walking the fest while sampling seafood dishes, BBQ, ice cream and other treats.

Where: City Hall Field, Holmes Beach

Web: islandartleague.org

MAIN STREET HOLIDAYS – New Port Richey counts down to Christmas, kicking off the first couple weekends of December with a holiday lights celebration, followed by a river boat parade, a kids' holiday production and movie, breakfast with Santa and Mrs. Claus and a nighttime street parade.

Where: Downtown New Port Richey

Web: nprmainstreet.com

HOLIDAY HOOPLA – Gulfport brings back its annual street event of holiday creativity, hosting arts, crafts and boutique vendors selling original gifts, a Christmas costume contest with prizes for best family, adult, kid and pet costumes and a lighted boat parade to end the evening.

Where: Gulfport

Web: gulfportma.com/holiday-hoopla

SNOW ON 7TH HOLIDAY PARADE – Ybor City's famous 7th Avenue turns into a winter wonderland of parading characters, colorful floats, marching bands, and a Santa Claus appearance, all under a veil of falling snow. Take photos with a large and festive Christmas tree in the center square and greet Tampa's mayor and his family.

Where: Historic Ybor City

Web: snowon7th.com

PLANT CITY BIKE FEST – Vintage cruisers and souped-up Harleys descend on quaint downtown Plant City for a day while kids and adults revel in the spectacle of a bearded lady contest, a hula hoop competition, a caricature artist, live bands, and a Santa appearance.

Where: McCall Park, downtown Plant City

Web: facebook.com/PlantCityBikeFest

SANTA FEST – Downtown Tampa's prettiest park becomes a holiday playground for kids, featuring ice skating, make-and-take craft areas, free photos with Santa and the Rough Riders' Holiday Parade with holiday characters, fire trucks and floats.

Where: Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, Tampa

Web: tampagov.net/santa-fest